FRANZ LISZT

THE GIPSY IN MUSIC

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FRANZ LISZT.

THE

GIPSY IN MUSIC

BY

FRANZ LISZT

The result of the Author's Life-long Experiences
and Investigations of the Gipsies and their Music

ENGLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME BY
EDWIN EVANS

Preceded by an Essay on Liszt and his Work

GIPSY AND JEW, TWO WANDERING RACES
GIPSY LIFE IN RELATION TO ART
GIPSY MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

WITH SEVEN PORTRAITS.

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME II.

WILLIAM REEVES
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"RHAPSODIES HONGROISES."

Composed 1851-1854.

The full list of Liszt's compositions is to be found in the "Thematisches Verzeichniss," published by Breitkopf. The famous "Rhapsodies Hongroises," the initial basis upon which the present work was formulated, are fifteen in number, as follows:

No. 1. E.
,, 2. C Sharp.
,, 3. B Flat.
,, 4. E Flat.
,, 5. E Minor.
,, 6. D Flat.
,, 7. D Minor.
,, 8. "Capriccio," F Sharp Minor.
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CHAPTER XX.

The Gipsy in Perspective

1.—Civilised counterparts of Bohemian sentiment.

IF the Bohemian type, so free from all exterior restraint and arbitrary convention—and if Bohemian art, in expressing the revolt of the soul against compression of the torrential outpour of its infinite desires have so powerfully combined to engage the attention of artists and poets as to become equally admired and popular in our high European Christian society (in spite of that scared poltroon shrinking at all contact with the despised Gipsy) that fact must be accepted as proof that Bohemian sentiment, or, in other words, the tendencies governing Bohemian existence and expressed by its art are less exclusively its own than would appear at a first glance.

Do we not meet in every society, however civilised and prosaic it may be, or however occupied it may seem with positive duties and mercantile profits—exceptional individuals, strongly inclined to resist all regulation of their ardent and subversive desires?

The difference is that, there, such groups occur but rarely; because, by its silently deteriorating influence, the atmosphere of civilisation chills and weakens those children who threaten to become ungovernable, if they are not at an early age brought under conventional rule. For all that, such instances occur; and, under the form of eccentricity, are far more frequent than is generally supposed.

We regard such persons as defectives, incapable as they are of performing their share of servile regulated work in the great social factory; but they, on the contrary, glory in their inaptitude, calling the malady from which they suffer "sacred," and one from which they would consent on no conditions to be relieved.

Poetic pathology has by no means left this sad anomaly without admirable descriptions; they exist in every style, under various titles, by various authors, dating from every period and in divers tongues.

We possess some beautiful examples of this—some in fresco, some in water-colour—written by princes of the poetic art. We shall not quote any, because each reader will certainly find it more agreeable to recall to mind the immortal and well-known specimens he treasures from the literature of any language with which he is familiar. Moreover the identity of sentiment, the resemblance of impressions, the conformity of emotions, of sighs and languors, of joys and heart-breakings do not constitute identity.

Byron was the first to set the fashion of the hero draped in the folds of a brown mantle; and, carping at a society which he has only been able to contemplate from the angle provided by the high position in it to which he was born. The exterior resemblance of the portraits is of no avail; for the costume and language of such heroes is different altogether from that of the Bohemian: half naked, half starved, half benumbed, half on the look-out.

Such personalities may resemble the Bohemian in being half sad, half happy, half cruel, half good, half insolent, half respectful. But, however we may be struck by these points in common, they alone would not justify us in making comparisons which demand a sustained parallel.

These considerations combine therefore to make it certain that more than one of these ideal figures, absolutely differing from the Bohemian in carriage, manner, constitution, language and education, has only been admired by us because he presented us, under other forms, with the very sentiments which the Gipsy had already revealed and re-awakened by his melodies and violin.

The Gipsy in Perspective

2.—The spurious growth called "Paris Bohemia."

Pride in general, as well as that particular form of it which consists of the contempt of one caste for another, is not by any means confined to India. But India, in order to explain and somewhat soften the *væ victis* which was being continually repeated by the conqueror to the conquered, endeavoured to ascribe a more or less noble origin to the dominating class. As this class shares out amongst itself the different works of society this contention was necessary in order to account for the extremely unequal shares enjoyed respectively by labour and wealth.

Christianity has also joined in the endeavour to uproot and destroy this kind of pride; but it met with no success, except with souls already gifted with natural greatness; producing practically no effect upon the people at large.

Philosophy also appeared on the scene, by contributing to render the forms assumed by disdain of the description alluded to less offensive than might be otherwise. It inspired the rising democracy (which was at first completely at sea as regards the nature of Christian society) with considerable envy of the greatest and most powerful—the learned or the happy. But, notwithstanding the influence of a feigned demeanour, in view of the menacing attitude of the newly-born democratic monster neither religion nor philosophy has been able to shake the principle which underlies the trouble. That principle is an inveterate presumption on the part of the great; the pride of the strong as towards the weak; and the lofty disdain of the children of the conquering race; as compared with the timid, though angry, submission of those of the conquered.

In the same way the strange pride shown by the Bohemian's tacit protest against a society thinking itself naturally superior to him has aroused sympathy even in the midst of that society itself. The sympathy thus aroused must not, moreover, be confounded with that of the poets elsewhere alluded to; because *their* praise of the Gipsy's independent life was not really sympathy with the Gipsy himself, but simply arose from a desire to be admitted to a share in liberty's prerogatives.

Not long ago, a certain number of young men, being enthusiastic in this sense as well as gifted and full of verve and

passion, caused a wave of equal surprise and scandal throughout high society by their lavish excesses, irreflective ventures and noble instincts. Their disordered fancies, courageous privations and witty pleasantries at last acquired a taint of bitterness, which they were not at any great trouble to disguise. The grievance was against the lucky ones of the age for taking no account of the talent and inspiration appearing in art-works emanating from a poor and uncertain existence; or, if they took any account at all, it was merely to regard them as playthings with which to pass an idle hour.

Similar to the Bohemian these young men, poor and gifted, wound up by rendering disdain for disdain to this society; which did not know how to be just to their higher aspirations, but which would have thought quite well of them had one of their number become a soldier, another a farmer, another a grocer, or another—say a purveyor of nightcaps.

Young writers and artists who had been affected by the dithyrambic effusions which so many voices had chanted in praise of liberty to the extent of becoming quite exalted, acquired an antipathy to all law and rule. These talented young men with brilliant, if ill-governed, imaginations, became so imbued with the impression of what a poetical mind might become in a tribe of enlightened Bohemians, highly instructed in science, literature and art, that they took their name and adopted manners bearing some little resemblance to those of the Gipsy.

They gave their fortuitous intimate meeting and precarious mode of life the name of

"Bohemia."

Instead of creating for themselves a perfect ideal by embodying the impressions they wished to glorify in one typical mythical personage despoiled of their wild realities, but morally up to the level of their intelligence, they enslaved themselves to the same symbol and type. They all called themselves

"Bohemians"

without further ado, and they sang the "Bohemia" of the poets and artists, as poets and artists should do.

There have been many attractive pages written, full of dazzling verse and heartfelt eloquence, in honour of this country of passion, imagination and fantasy. There have been

sketched some of the proudest thoughts which a fine disdain could utter. A disdain for that civilisation which employs the shadow of its hypocrisies to hide its perversity and allows of accommodations with the vile and ignoble. A disdain for the advantages with which it rewards the apostacies expressed either in sublime anger or holy indignation.

There have been sown upon this rough soil some of the most beautiful lines inspired by ambitious appeals of the finest natures to that infinite and free felicity invoked by all great souls.

Unfortunately the disinterested aspirations, generous and often heroic, which might be held to excuse a course of conduct having neither bridle nor compass, faded away necessarily under such artificial conditions; the vacancies being filled by dupes—though far more frequently by rogues. This went on so surely that, in course of years, that which at first had at all events a gloss of poetry had rather a taint of grossness, the folly of the passions represented by it being on a level with that of the reasons by which they were supported.

At the present time the expression

"Bohemia of Paris"

signifies simply an assemblage of worthless men and women of disorderly life; at which society can only blush, virtue become indignant and religion afflicted.

3.—The Gipsy's fictitious ennoblement.

Besides what has been just described there have been many people, possessed of imaginations inclined to the "picturesque," who have been struck by the contrasts and surprises appearing in the genuine Bohemian's mode of life. His sudden and unexpected departures and re-appearances, his many relations with people of high station and his mocking pretension of being as superior to them as to the working-classes—all these counted as so many features of interest; in spite of his rags his miserable nourishment, his crass ignorance, his suspected communion with evil spirits and his odious occupations. All narrators have seized upon the subject of contrast as so much

material; supple, tractable, rich and vaporous at the same time; in short, it was a subject as if purposely made for fantastic embroidery.

Poets, novel-writers and dramatic authors always on the look-out for matter calculated to arouse the curiosity of the reader and keep his interest in suspense, could not afford to miss the striking situations produced by the approach to the peaceful banalities of ordinary civilised life of a creature so incomprehensible as the Bohemian. How easy it was for them to bring out the advantages enjoyed by those whose life was entirely free of all subservience to our social regulations; regulations more numerous than those of barrack discipline and more enslaving than those of police.

In working this idea they had only to appeal to the fantastic fascination of resolutions spontaneously acted upon and destinies absolutely free; with no conventions to observe and no prejudice to fear. They very easily discovered how to produce some very wonderful effects by showing the strength of the Bohemian's claim over men who are the slaves of their daily tasks.

The claim in favour of these new characters was that they had no task, recognised no duty and were engaged on no mission. They were ready to brave all fears and affront all risks. They were not serfs attached to any glebe, but deemed themselves above all considerations of social life, family or personal position, and not affected by any of the terrors and weaknesses which the civilised man displays when face to face with the obscurities or disturbances of Nature.

Genius and talent have not been slow to profit by such a happy combination of circumstances, always picturesque and sometimes poetical. Many well-known leading characters of poem, novel and drama owe in fact their existence thereto.

This vein had been well explored and exploited—we should even say exhausted, but for the fact that it somehow came to life again. Each country, for instance, had its special author whose vocation seemed to be to attribute to the Zingaro, notwithstanding his rough exterior, a nobility of principle enabling him to perform actions full of goodness and mercy. Presumably, the intended implication was that such actions were either difficult or impossible to individualities bound by the considerations of an existence riveted to the domestic hearth. An existence, moreover, bound to take heed of re-

sponsibilities, both as heir of the historic past and guardian of the interests of future generations, and to provide defence against the many obstacles presented by Nature to the accomplishment of all human desire.

Such authors were always ready to credit the Bohemian with intervening in some wondrous manner in the catastrophes of our wars, in the complexities of our intrigues, and in the vicissitudes and adversities of our fortunes. These heroes enjoyed, in their hands, the advantage of being unburdened with any historic luggage, untroubled by any regard for the future, capable of suspending at will any noble desires or intentions, and ready to brave all difficulties which the fury or menace of Nature might create.

To imagine the Bohemian as he might be if it were possible to unite the present conditions of his independent existence with a sufficient training of mind and heart to enable him to intervene intelligently—that was the datum; and it was one too tempting for such authors to resist. The Gipsy could at one time be made to appear as a genius, friendly to the good and hostile to the wicked. At another, he would be full of compassion for innocence unjustly attacked, and of sympathy with the affections of young hearts kept asunder by the operations of old hatreds.

It will easily be seen that to call in the Gipsy at all severe complications of our entangled adventures was too helpful to the incidents of romantic fable not to be often employed; but, in recording that it was so employed, we must admit that it was for the most part skilfully treated. The women of the race, too, brown, beautiful and electrically ardent, with a costume retaining its Oriental character, its charm of colour and luxury of sparkling metal, contributed to the effect by appearing to step forward out of the unknown background of their mysterious existence—an illusion reminding one of that of the wavy palms of a Bagdad carpet; which seem, by their emergence from a black foundation, to rest on nothing.

The effect thus shown to be producible by a proper stage-setting of the characteristics of this Asiatic race has been unfortunately but too well understood; for it has been so persistently employed as at last to have become quite wearisome.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Gipsy in Literature

1.—In Spain.

IF we do not mistake Spain was the first to acclimatise this romantic element in its works of imagination; the great Cervantes having introduced it in his novel, "Gitanilla," as principal subject instead of as a mere episode. His genius showed a highly penetrative intuition; going completely beyond what had occurred to other poets who had employed the Bohemian for dramatic purposes by showing us the real moving force of his life, which he prefers with all its pains to that which we offer him with all its pleasures.

The way in which Cervantes produces this effect is by placing words eloquently describing their enthusiasm for Nature in the mouth of one of his characters—an old man, who speaks as follows:

> We are kings of the fields and prairies, forests, mountains, springs and rivers. The woods furnish us with branches, the trees with fruit, the vines with grapes, the gardens with vegetables, the torrents with water, the rivers with fish, and the bushes with game. We find shade under the rocks, coolness in the grottos, and domicile in the caverns. For us tempests are but gentle breezes, snow a refresher, rain a bath, thunder our music, and lightning our torch.
>
> For our steeled limbs the hard ground is as soft as eider-down, for our rude skin is like an arm of defence or a coat of armour. Our dexterity is not trammelled by any chain, nor discouraged by any difficulty, nor stopped by any high walls. Our courage is not dismayed by any gibbet, destroyed by any axe, or worn out by any torture.
>
> We see no difference between "yes" and "no," as whichever suits us best we take; and we do not distinguish between martyr and confessor. No eagle or bird of prey more promptly pounces upon a booty

once perceived. We sing in prison, but are silent under torture; we maraud in the day-time and steal at night; or rather, we remind people not to forget where they hide their property. We are not disturbed by any fear of losing our honour or by any ambition to increase it. We do not cultivate any acquaintance and our slumber is never disturbed by thoughts of any petition, or of any kind of begging for favours.

We prefer our ragged tents to gilded decorations, marble palaces and pictures of the Flemish school where landscapes will not compare with Nature's beauty. The lofty arid rocks, the icy mountain summits, the vast prairies and thick forests—they all belong to us as soon as we set foot there, and all smile at us the moment they appear to our sight.

2.—In other countries.

In Germany it is considered that Spindler's historical novel, "The Jew," presents a lively coloured picture of how encampments must have appeared in the Middle Ages, and even now are to be met with in some far distant countries. Hordes consisting of the most noisy children, brawling and quarrelsome old women, and mules covered with cloths and provided with sounding bells. Add to these the jingle of copper and iron implements, drums of the noisiest and fifes of the sharpest description, neighings, grindings, gratings, mewings and cracklings—the whole set off by the liveliness of worn-out clothes of the gaudiest colours, mantles of the harlequin description made of the liveliest yellow and green, and offering a clownish spectacle of the drollest kind.

The pages of "Notre Dame de Paris" were so vigorously coloured as to throw everything that had previously been written completely into the shade. Victor Hugo made it extremely difficult to add the slightest touch to his evocations, which leave the impression of having been wrought in sculpture, as when one examines the hideousness of the wicked spirits keeping watch in the "cour des miracles"; or that of having been traced by the most skilful pencil, when one considers the effects alike of perspective, artistically filtered rays and regulated degrees of light, between the agglomeration of heads in a heap of hideosities.

Many an anecdote sketched by Borrow presents us with similar scenes and characters, but it always appears as if we were only allowed to view them through a glass which had been mercifully toned in order to reduce the crudity of the sight

presented. Yet there is more reality in the chaste sobriety of his description than in the luxury and violent colours thickly applied by the hero of French prose.

In quoting the Zingaro of the Spaniards, the Meg Merrilies of England, the Esmeralda of Paris, the Zemphira of Russia, the Preciosa of Weber, the Vielka of Meyerbeer, and others, we do no more than mention names known to everybody and probably more familiar to us than the Biblical characters were to the Scotch puritans.

In these we have the most glorious types of poetical Bohemian characters, male and female, as are to be met with in literature, surrounded by a prestige attractive and difficult to define; being sometimes dark and wild, sometimes full of grace and seduction.

But how many more must there be possessing no less remarkable traits or charm of character although unknown.

3.—Among the Poets.

It thus appears that fictional personages, having no exterior relation to the Bohemian race or connection of any kind with them except an instinct of pride and liberty and the melancholy which they alternate with exuberant joy of a mad description, have been animated by authors with sentiments in agreement with those expressed by Bohemian art. But, besides the authors who have treated the Bohemians merely as dramatic material and as a strange figure well suited to relieve the monotony of too simple surroundings, there were several poets who, transforming themselves by force of imagination into one of these characters tried to experience the very heart-beat and pulsations called up by their wild existence, and to give back to us in language provoked by that point of view their state of soul as regards the sentiments entertained towards their fellow-creatures.

Puschkin introduces, in his poem devoted to them, a song which he heard sung by Bohemians of South Russia, and which is still in vogue amongst them. The Russian language gives to these lines a singular energy by the richness of its endings and its rapid rhythms; resembling the panting respiration which we may imagine as preceding the committal of a crime.

I.

Aged spouse, barbarous spouse,
Strangle me, cast me into the flames,
I can endure it. I fear not
Iron or fire.

II.

I hate you,
I despise you,
It is another one I love,
And I die for love of him.

III.

Strangle me, cast me into the flames,
Aged spouse, barbarous spouse,
I know how to keep silent,
You will never know him.

IV.

He is sweeter than the spring,
More burning than a summer day,
He is young, he is beautiful,
And full of love for me.

V.

How I have embraced him
In the silence of night,
And how we laughed then
At your grey beard.

Borrow has drawn attention to the corporal chastity of the Bohemians, supporting his statement by the judicious remark that otherwise the race could not have been maintained in purity. Those who agree with that opinion and are aware of the influence upon a woman of that virtue which can only be once lost, will recognise in these verses the savage passion which ignites the poisoned fire in an adulterous breast. Anger, irony, voluptuousness, hatred and arrogant resentment—all these pointed shafts are here employed and fearlessly brandished.

4.—An exposition of mistaken views.

Fegner has adopted as an epigraph for his work on the Bohemians the following well-known verse of a song by Goethe.

VANITAS.

On nothing rests this aim of mine,
Hurrah!
And he who would my comrade be,
Let him step forth now and join with me
To drain this pot of wine.*

We are obliged to observe, solely for the purpose of facilitating the comprehension of the various shades which in our opinion constitute the real Bohemian sentiment, that these lines are by no means in correspondence with it. This poetry expresses perfectly the frivolity and cynicism with which the word Salamon, here used as title, can be vulgarised. But the author who tried to adapt this song of a rackety student and adventurer out of luck to the tent-men, who know just as well how to be proud and taciturn as expansive and good-natured, knew very little about the Bohemian character; or he would have known that cynicism very seldom appears in it. Scarcely ever can it be said to issue from his lips, if we distinguish between a cynical term and a sentiment.

The Bohemians know how to love. But, if asked what they love, each one would reply differently. There is one love however which is everything to all of them—the love, profound, sincere and insatiable, of Nature. Whosoever loves and knows how to do so with sacrifice is never cynical. Cynicism is the special attribute of those souls who more or less resemble the ingrate of whom St. Teresa said:

The wretched one—he does not love.

If ever a cynical expression was heard from a Bohemian it can only have been like the bitter rind incautiously bitten, in his eagerness to devour a fruit which he cast out in disgust.

The profligate who is weary of all emotions may, with an ignoble despair, rest his aim on nothing. But the Bohemian has no aim and furthermore he is the last to consider the liberty of his life, and his passionate enjoyments due to the various exciting causes of Nature, as *nothing*. It would be

---

* Ich hab' mein Sach' auf nichts gestellt
Juchhe!
Und wer will mein Kamerade sein
Der stosse mit an, der stimme mit ein
Bei dieser Neige Wein.
(Goethe.)

necessary to have known and estimated highly the advantages of society to have associated the idea of annihilation with a nomadic life. The nomad himself firmly believes the contrary; because in his view it is precisely the nomadic life which provides all the benefits which are *positive*; whereas it is the cramped-up destinies of stable societies which produce an entire negation of the most precious joys of earth.

The true Bohemian character could not be more removed than it is from that of the nihilist. On the contrary, his is the type of a distracted lover; who adores, and who knows the impossibility of mastering the object of his unextinguishable flame. Yet he can never cease to be enraptured by it; and to be its slave, even at the risk of being one day its victim.

Moreover, it is not open to any one who chooses to be the comrade of the Bohemian—proud and insolent up to the gallows. His apparent easiness of approach does not render his exclusiveness any the less real; for, though he is friendly with every one he meets, he cannot be said to associate with any but his own.

With men and women alike this racial sense takes the place of religion, country and social legislation. Such as it is now with them, such it will remain; for it will certainly never be mixed with any other race, either by admitting strangers or by straggling over to them.

It is important therefore to embrace at one stroke the entire extent of Bohemian art, and to avoid the error of accepting Bohemian sentiment as a negation—a mere privative, set off by a few bright spangles. It is equally important not to mistake the Bohemian type by supposing it merely to indicate rebellion—a denial of certain benefits by sheer obstinacy in refusing them. Nothing could be more false or more unlikely. The real type of the Bohemian, incarnating the Bohemian sentiment, which is expressed in Bohemian art, is essentially affirmative and eminently positive. Without this affirmative element, which is its main constituent, it could not possibly have been maintained so integrally amongst a whole people during so many centuries. It does not lie in human nature to so continue to reject a benefit, otherwise than through a decided preference for something else held to be superior, and to which it is attached; and, surely, if this applies to an individual then, so much the more does it apply to a whole people.

Moreover, but for this positive force of cohesion, the race would easily and long ago have melted away, little by little. It would have lost those who compose it one by one in the same degree as they approached this or that civilisation. Gradually they would all have quitted their tents in order to accept the beliefs and laws, the houses and securities, which they all offer in the very first place against the terrors and misdeeds of Dame Nature.

But all that is precisely what the Bohemian will not have at any price. By refusing it he does not mean to deny the soft well-being of the societies. He is not like the blind who will not see; the idiot who will not understand; nor is he too insensible to be able to feel the nature of the offer which is made to him. But by casting himself into the arms of Nature he affirms his preference for that intimacy with her which civilisation forcibly robs him of. It robs him of her most tender secrets and dearest joys by placing him out of reach of her dangers and by removing him from daily contact with her. It is that daily contact which brings him by degrees to the point of so falling in love with her secret charms that an obstinacy results which can only be considered unhealthy, as it often amounts to pure folly and sometimes even to madness.

It follows therefore that Fegner's epigraph might perhaps very well serve as motto for a Bohemian of the Paris description; that is to say, of the false or manufactured sort.

But Paris-Bohemia, which was never more than a bad counterfeit and hollow representation of an inimitable original, is now completely discredited.

5.—*Lenau and the "Three Bohemians."*

When once the power has been acquired of reading Bohemian sentiment in the Bohemian type—a sentiment essentially positive and active—it would be impossible to express more admirably the dreamy, idle and careless disdain of the Gipsy's philosophy than Lenau has done in his little poem entitled "The Three Bohemians." He has not imagined them as speaking; so that, necessarily, no words of contempt of society occur.

In reality the Bohemian prizes social advantages very highly. This results naturally from the fact that he is only familiar with their bright side. He knows nothing about the close connection between riches and unhappiness; between luxury and satiety; between well-being and ennui; between honours and their after-taste; between glory and tears, or between power and oppression. He does not know the working of these things because he has never possessed them.

How, for example, could the Gipsy possibly suppose that our purple and ermine are lined with mourning and that all our crowns, whether of gold or iron, laurels or flowers, have equally their thorns? The advantages of civilisation appear of infinite price to the Bohemian, who often suffers most cruelly for want of some of its simplest benefits. But, being determined to sell his liberty at no price whatever, nor part with his possession of Nature in exchange for any possible felicity, he passes by. He is far too absorbed by ruminations on his own love for the great goddess to stop and discover defects in our system; the painful side of our joys and the poison lurking in all our pleasures.

Lenau has chosen to sketch the Bohemians at repose; and has done it so well that the group exhibits all the eloquence of a poetic incident snap-shotted; for it involuntarily unveils the dispositions of the soul by the means of attitude and expression alone.

THE THREE BOHEMIANS.

Three Gipsies whom I met one day
  Were in a meadow lying,
As my chariot hard to find its way
  Through the sandy plain was trying.

One was a song for himself alone
  Upon his fiddle bowing,
While the evening sun around him shone,
  And like his song was glowing.

Pipe in mouth the next remained
  Watching the smoke uprising,
Happy as if the earth contained
  Nothing else worth prizing.

The third I saw reposeful slept,
  His lute from tree suspended,
And across its strings the breezes kept
  His dreams with music blended.

Their clothes were old and they had all three
  Used many a tint to mend them,
They scoff'd aloud with a joy more free
  Than the townish world could send them.

So I found it prov'd in a threefold way
  That when life is once benighted,
It is lost in song and smoke and play,
  And is thereby triply slighted.

But I pondered long on these Gipsies three
  My onward way a-going,
On the dark-brown skins and the faces free
  And the jet-black locks a-flowing.*

Alas! . . . . For Lenau himself life had actually become

---

* Drei Zigeuner fand ich einmal
  Liegen an einer Weide
Als mein Fuhrwerk mit müder Qual
  Schlich durch sandige Heide.

Hielt der Eine für sich allein
  In den Händen die Fidel,
Spielt umglühet vom Abendschein,
  Sich ein feuriges Liedel.

Hielt der Zweite die pfeif' im Mund
  Blickte nach seinem Rauche,
Froh als ob er vom Erdenrund,
  Nichts zum Glücke mehr brauche.

Und der Dritte behaglich schlief,
  Und sein Zymbal am Baum hing;
Über die Saiten der Windhauch lief,
  Über sein Herz ein Traum ging.

An den Kleidern trugen die Drei
  Löcher und bunte Flicken,
Und sie boten trotzig frei
  Spott den Erdengeschicken!

Dreifach haben sie mir gezeigt,
  Wenn das Leben uns nachtet,
Wie man's verrauscht, verschläft, vergeigt,
  Und es dreifach verachtet.

Nach den Zigeunern lang'nach schau'n
  Musst' ich im Weiterfahren,
Nach den Gesichtern dunkelbraun,
  Den schwarzlockigen Haaren.

(Lenau.)

benighted, but he could not think that it was so for these three men; one of whom was playing a glowing song.

While the evening sun around him shone,

thus glorifying his love; another was smoking and thinking about the past and future of his terrible mistress,

Happy as if the earth contained
Nothing else worth prizing—

and the third was sleeping to gather strength with which to court and conquer, and one day lay down his life for the goddess now the subject of his dreams.

CHAPTER XXII.

Art Communion with the Gipsy.

1.—Present conditions.

WHATEVER may be the number of Bohemians who have already figured in the romances, dramas and poems of our authors, the vein is evidently not exhausted; as new figures appear every day on the poetical and literary scene, and accordingly go to augment the group of "invented," or it would perhaps be better to call them "artificial" Bohemians—in fact, such extremely artificial Bohemians that they frequently bear but a very remote likeness to the genuine article. It does not appear however that any reason exists why there should not be more truth attached to the appearance, whether on the stage or in a novel, of these personages who are now a kind of *Deus ex machina*; but, in order to do that, it would be necessary to cease considering them from our own point of view exclusively (as has been done up to the present) and proceed to adopt their special standpoint, at all events for all observations made by, and for any actions attributed directly to, the various characters represented.

This has up to the present never been properly done and constitutes a procedure which would probably inaugurate a new poetry in their regard; though it might not prove an easy matter to define its point of departure. One of the first necessities would be to avoid making the Bohemian act even in a subordinate part according to the ideas and desires of our dramatic combinations on those occasions when his intervention is necessary to unravel a difficult situation. It would be

necessary in future to cause everything in the way of movement (whether from old man, young girl, man or woman) to proceed from impulsions of the soul or of the passions; or from their ideal of happiness or misfortune according to their conception of what is desirable or preferable.

Now can this be done by anyone who is not a Bohemian? He could not do it even in music. Even that musician who from childhood has been most familiar with their art—not only with its esoteric sense but also with its exoteric forms—even he could not venture to sing in this mode unique in the world which from the Indies has fortunately come to us saturated with the aroma of tropical vegetation. Even he who has become thoroughly initiated in the mysteries of Bohemian art can never be sufficiently master of Bohemian sentiment to formulate its expression as from his own heart and native inspiration.

Such a musician can only reproduce the music of these Asiatics, rendering it comprehensible and appreciable by us. Even this however must be done without mutilating, disfiguring or effeminating it, without vulgarising or distorting it; but granting these conditions he will be able to bring Gipsy art much closer to fulfilment of exigencies of our senses and of acoustics, as well as of our instruments and orchestration.

The gift of virtuosity naturally contributes more than anything else to the reproduction of the soul of this race in a true and living manner. The artist who in imagination has assimilated Bohemian sentiment may borrow from their art the marvels of its colouring, the unexpected keys, the luxuriant ornamentation and the exotic intervals which stupefy our senses. He may go so far in copying its traits as finally to believe in a moment of enthusiasm that he can compete with—or even surpass them.

What an illusion! If our orchestra with all its resources—resources so wonderful that preceding ages would have thought them fabulous—cannot in any manner render the primitive Bohemian effects we may be sure that the greatest European virtuoso, even were he a Paganini, would never be able to do so. He would never be, for a real Bohemian audience, the same as a virtuoso of their own race; so that in spite of the fact that it is in our power to elevate their art (as is freely admitted) yet on account of this music being still Hindoo and its natural audience still as primitive as its own

Hongro-bohemian orchestra, a player of its own race is indispensable and would be instantly reorganised.

We appeal on this to the shade of Bihary. He would confirm it.

2.—Special difficulties of the musician.

But if the European musician or virtuoso can never hope to attain even after thirty years of sincere study to all the verve of Bohemian sentiment as expressed in Bohemian art how will the case stand with a writer? He will certainly not be contented with merely borrowing the colour of impressions rendering the slow or rapid descent of tints and reproducing depth and intensity. He is obliged to model all, so to speak, forced by the conditions of his art to give to all a sort of plasticity. He should also account for the psychological process and seize the transformations of sentiment in their flight.

The task also falls to the European musician of dealing with intuitions of inspired moments, respecting which nothing is ever said or revealed or betrayed by those for whom they constitute the most vital pulsations. Such intuitions in continual succession are precisely what fills up their existence; and the task of carrying them into a sphere without penumbra, where the articulate word casts a flat ray of crude light upon these mysteries of the soul, is an impossible one. There the outline of his motivations would be sharply defined like lines engraved upon a stone. No soft light can ever tint or any obscurity invest them with palpitating uncertainty.

Such an attempt would inevitably remind us of the graver's tool in trying to reproduce a painting of Rubens, in which the outlines are scarcely discernible and the poetry consists in the indescribable play of colour.

Therefore, however intelligent the Bohemians of the European "Bohemia" called Parisian their talent will never extend to the divination of what it is not given to any mind to unravel, and which no amount of study can ever penetrate. The case is fairly one for application of the well known saying:

The mind which serves for all suffices for none.

Art Communion with the Gipsy

It may be true that to follow the Gipsy up to the point of singing what he has sung; of presenting outwardly something which he inwardly feels and in depicting his features by making them express something exteriorly which he generally inwardly conceals—to do all this it is enough to have frequented him, interrogated him, seen him happy and—perhaps under the inspiration of Bacchus. He is by the way not so familiar with Silenus as the townsmen are, which is greatly to his credit. Other conditions necessary for carrying out the purposes mentioned are to have entered familiarly into his existence and even to have lived some time with him.

But to add one item to the Gipsy's store, to feel as he feels, think as he thinks and speak as he speaks to himself one must have shared his passions, terrors, joys, and above all, perils by living not only *with* him but *like* him. Now, let us ask:

Of all those who have thought they were imitating the Bohemian by imagining for him an ideal type—

Of all those who have tried to render, in their fashion, the sentiment called by his name—

And of all those who have thought they could imitate the art which he has created—

is there a single one who would have consented to share his passion for Nature, and to live his life in order to contract the multitude of emotions which attend that passion?

We can safely say—Not one! there is not one who has ever experienced in the faintest degree, and still less one who has felt with equal frenzy the scale of his soul, endlessly modulated on enharmonic notes, in augmentations and diminutions, or, as one might say, in generating emotions. These, while we scarcely understand them at all, serve to enable the Gipsy to pass without the slightest traditional convention from a minor, mournful as the night, to a major, bright as Aurora.

But besides all that there is not one who has ever tried to discover from this passion the solution of the Bohemian enigma. Not one has understood the nature of this culminating passion—the only true one as it is also the only one surviving in the Gipsy heart. Surely however he who takes no account of such a cause can never hope to appreciate its psychical effects.

3.—Special difficulties of the Littérateur.

A Spanish writer of genius, as we have shown, was the first to unravel the secret of the Bohemian race. Yet that secret is one which the Gipsy himself never attempts to hide; for it is simply a love without name or limit for creation. It is also a love which for intensity eclipses every other.

A French writer, too, once formed the idea of living the Gipsy life for a while and of sharing their salamander joys and pleasures but without any inoculation of the racial feeling; the fact remaining that whoever has attempted either to describe, imitate, sing or glorify the Bohemian has never succeeded to identify himself with the true motive force—the only motive force of that race's being.

The reason is simply that they are entirely inexperienced in anything resembling the Gipsy's passionate craving to live always under the eye of Nature, in her arms, within her constant embrace and under her sole sway.

It seems clear that no artist of either bow, pencil or pen, unless he happen to have Gipsy blood in his veins is ever likely to push matters so far as to live *like* them. He might in order to succeed in thinking and feeling as they do live for a short time *with* them, but during that time there could be little emotion, as the consciousness of being observed would be sure to prove fatal to any such exhibition.

We easily perceive this in the pages of Borrow, sympathetic and even affectionate as he is, so desirous too of penetrating to the inner soul feelings of the race. He found that they seemed to be concealing an element—it might almost be said, a spiritual sense, one which we ourselves do not possess, notwithstanding that we look upon them as deprived of a whole group of faculties which we enjoy. The fact is that the method of submitting the Gipsy to premeditated experiences—to a sort of physical course of comparative anatomy—will not enable us to grasp the interior structure and internal movement of his moral being.

To know the Gipsy in the full sense and therefore better than he knows himself, thus to be prepared to take his life-portrait, one would have to become a Bohemian without ceasing to be a European. Who would dare this? And who could carry it through even should he dare?

Does this mean that literary art must for ever despair of a theme which the painter has more than once handled successfully, and which music in particular has appropriated to such a large extent? There would seem to be some artistic cowardice in such a fear; for no artist should ever distrust the power of art's expression. That which may have long remained impossible for want of certain means is often brought within reach by new discoveries which it is not given to us to foresee. Who, for example, could have predicted, before the nineteenth century, the new worlds contained in our present orchestra? A benign providence does not impose upon poets the torture of experiencing sentiments which they have no power to express. While means are lacking their imagination shapes itself accordingly; but as soon as the possibility of expression manifests itself the sentiments are soon acquired.

At the present time a writer may find it difficult to take down with precision the Gipsy emotions as they are in reality, but that by no means proves that the same difficulty will always exist, and that later there will not arise other conditions. The impossible of yesterday becomes the possible of to-morrow without our having had any suspicion of what was about to happen, for to have suspected would have been to have already made the discovery. It is the same in this as in other things. Who, for example, had the least idea of the spectroscope divulging the secret of the composition of the stars, before it was actually there? Who had the least idea of the photophone, which perhaps will one day enable us to correspond through immensities of space with the inhabitants of other planets, before it was actually invented?

4.—The case of Jacques Callot.

We could scarcely speak of the Bohemians without calling to mind that poet who, out of all who have ever described the Gipsy in any art is the one who understood their sentiment the best because he shared their life. He who associated himself with them because like them he loved liberty, variety and caprice. He who when he left them brought away with him a secret dislike for our institutions, the horrors of which he stigmatised in his "Evils of War"—evils which in his mind

were coupled with those of the semi-wild life of the Bohemians.

How could we forget Jacques Callot the lovable child, received, nourished and petted by the Zingarelli?

Never was he ungrateful—either to the men whom he accompanied on their merry poaching expeditions, or to the women whose savoury beauty he adored. They carried him on their shoulders, he travelled in their waggons, their joys were his; and so, by degrees he became enamoured of their existence. It was one which seemed to him free alike of grumbling admonitions and paternal severities; there was plenty of charming folly, and plenty of blazing light. As for the Gipsies themselves they were always full of hope and song and merriment.

Such they made it for him—these unexpected protectors with whom he took refuge from the overdone severities of a pedant education. His teachers had been vainly trying to keep in a state of chrysalis the beautiful butterfly whose wings were marked with the eloquent eccentricity of genius. But he only became familiar with the brighter side of the Gipsy's lot —that life of eternal Italian spring. And even if amongst them he endured a little hunger or cold it was always *con tanta allegra.* How much better was their hunger than his own family's "wise abstinence"! How much better their cold than the family icy remonstrance! How much better to sleep in the open than to be shut up in a fusty little room!

After all, however, his inspiration merely consisted in the flight from one of our kinds of life which he found too narrow and the search for another which should be more spacious. He even abandoned the tents of the Bohemians where he had been so kindly treated as soon as he had attained his heart's desire. He thought no more of their haughty goddess, of their temple, of their worship. He did not even think of Nature—she for whom they not only live, but live *as* they live. Still, he certainly did not forget his old gay and blithesome comrades.

Though he quitted them he took them with him into the ideal world. It is there that free and untrammelled the poet decides whom to receive and invest with his mystic nobleness; and viewed in this light Callot's gratitude became glorious indeed. Such gratitude more than that of the kings of earth dispenses immortality; for of the poet it has been truly said:

His eye eternal makes each object of its glance.

Now, his old creditors have become guests in his new empire, there they reap in celebrity what they had formerly sown in goodness.

In other words Jacques Callot having lived for some years as a Bohemian among the Bohemians sketched them from nature and from a sympathetic point of view; his pencil being always inspired by a verve, a life and a fidelity which seemed to paint their soul at the same time as their features.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Gipsy's Critics.

1.—Criticism of the Gipsy.

THE marvellous existence and tenacious vitality of the Bohemians has naturally provoked the activity of investigators who have endeavoured by various means to penetrate the secret of their origin. This object has been assisted by examination of their dialect, manners and beliefs, besides being furthered by the increased knowledge we now have of their resources, nourishment, encampments, enjoyments, funerals, industries, and so on. Resulting from these investigations there are several Hungarian works upon the subject, some written in Magyar, others in Latin; but they continually repeat one another in essentials the only difference being that the amount of detail varies considerably and that the dates of publication are wide apart.

Than this last fact, what could better prove how little the Bohemians have changed? So much is evident; but, beyond it, the works mentioned add nothing to what we already know. Their contents never go beyond what Grellman has collected; the fact being that Grellman and Fegner between them have not only brought together all the knowledge possessed by the middle ages and transmitted by them (not always with absolute truth) but have also included the results of our modern researches. We may mention as an example that Borrow has given us the entire Gipsy portrait from nature, only describing what he actually saw; and Pott has exhaustively treated the Gipsy language in a very learned and comprehensive work.

2.—Grellman's account.

Grellman describes the Bohemians with the cold glance of the naturalist who, observing a disgusting phase of animal or insect life, does violence to his own feelings out of enthusiasm for the advancement of science. He defends them with a sort of generosity against the accusation of cannibalism; but, whilst indignant at the persecutions and sufferings caused to them by unjust suspicions on that account, he cannot overcome a feeling of horror in their respect; and he certainly is very far from deeming it possible that even the most remote trace of any human nobleness will ever be found in them.

These views inevitably produce a feeling in the reader that the mere aspect of the Gipsies was sufficient to cause in him an invincible distaste, and that it needed only their exterior to repulse him. He describes the miserable dwelling places which they hollow out of the snow in order to escape the rigours of winter and their ragged coverings stinking with grease (but still in favour on account of their bright colours, just as the Phenicians were fond of purple and the Orientals of green). He also gives details of their nourishment, by representing their recourse to foods, to which they are only driven by the desperation of hunger, as a proof of their depraved taste; and he even goes so far as to venture some revolting suppositions of his own on what he pretends may be the promiscuity of their manners.

After this we can only find it natural for him to accumulate accounts of their frauds, thefts and larcenies and generally to adopt a style the object of which seems to be to prove that anything Bohemian of whatever kind is necessarily hideous in his view.

Notwithstanding these questionable features however his book is justly estimated as a collection. It is a merely elementary record but (apart from the considerations just mentioned) a faithful one. It certainly is the result of laborious, conscientious and learned research; but it leaves us in considerable doubt whether his advancements are all that remains to be said; especially in the case of a people who for so long have been brutally treated by the whole of the rest of humanity.

3.—Borrow's account.

Borrow made himself half a Bohemian. Not only did he study the Gipsy vocabulary; he spoke their language. Not only did he inform himself of their manner of life, he lived along with them. He has been one at their repasts; he has seen their dances by the bivouac fires in the depths of the forests, and he has assisted both at their marriages and at their funerals. He has seen them born and seen them die; he has seen their women sometimes gay and at other times sad; and he has seen them loving their own children and stealing those of the Giorgio. He has also seen them safeguarding their own chastity and selling that of others; watching over their own girls and delivering others retained for the purpose. He has been familiar with their mysteries and their watchwords, and was in fact accepted by them as a Romma (the meaning of which is "as a man") and actually told by them that if he had not the blood of a Gitano in his veins his soul must certainly at some time have inhabited one.

Borrow speaks of them without any exaltation over virtues they do not possess or any enthusiasm for the sublimities which are sometimes gratuitously attributed to them; but he is equally free from that detestation so conspicuous in other authors as also from rancour against their demoralisation of the peculiar logic of which he seems to have a sympathetic presentiment.

It is strange that it should happen to be amongst the English that such an investigator should have arisen. To them more than to most other peoples the squalid vices of the Gipsy seem the least excusable and his extenuating qualities the least comprehensible. Yet in Borrow we have a writer who has had the patient and humane curiosity to make the closest observation. He has associated himself with their wandering life without ever sharing its excesses and he is therefore in the best possible position to fathom the secret of their attraction for the life they lead, as a mysterious possibility of their regeneration.

It is further strange that it should be precisely this Englishman who has held out a brotherly hand to them, who has studied them as fellow-creatures of his own, who has made himself their obliged guest in eating and drinking with them

entirely for the purpose of entering more deeply into their friendship and not from any necessity of his own. When he is speaking we seem to detect a sympathetic chord vibrating in his heart; we feel that he abstains from condemning because of attributing motives easily forgiven in cases where he cannot hope to clear them altogether.

We incline to attribute this strange friendship to two reasons.

Firstly there is the extreme sensibility of the English for the beauties of Nature, rendering the attraction exercised by Nature upon the Bohemian more easily comprehended by them; for example, it was the appreciation by the English of "fine scenery" which led them to borrow the art of landscape gardening from the Chinese.

A second fact which may have contributed to induce an Englishman preferably to give impartial study to so forbidding a race, is the innate respect of his nation for personal liberty, irrespective of the use which may be made of it. For them, it is true, this liberty is limited by law which in its turn is equally respected. But for an Englishman a very slight dose of romanticism suffices to view with an indulgent eye any fantastic use to which liberty may be put. He is easily inspired with sympathy for a wild exercise of independence, no matter what may be the object of infatuation or the magic charm from which the action results; but he will be especially indulgent if it should be for love of nature, the despotic but attractive.

It is difficult to read the pages of Borrow without to some extent sharing his passion for the ragamuffins whose company he sought; taking every opportunity which chance afforded for that purpose; and chance, as we know, always treats those well who know how to use it. We cannot help admiring the tranquility and assurance shown by this honest man in the midst of the robberies of which he was a passive witness. He had no share in the perfidies of his hosts, but on the other hand he would not betray them; for in any case it would have been scarcely profitable for the sake of a police instruction to lose all hope of the twofold object he had in view; that of insinuating some moral notions into their minds and of awakening interest in their favour by his writings.

It is curious to observe the almost priestly prudence, the gentle precautions and ingenious modes of expression adopted

before his special congregation in order to distribute to them some Christian ideas of right and wrong; the tenderness he has for these neglected souls, whom he is endeavouring to enlighten in the very act of enlightening himself about them.

Borrow is disgusted at the strange neglect of the Gipsy by missionaries of every religion. That is true! What pains are devoted to far-off missions whilst not a single priest ever gives him a thought. Rome sends its martyrs to China and Japan. England spreads its missionaries amongst the savages of Australia and America, whilst the Bohemians who live in constant relation with us never attract the attention of any church or preacher.

We thus see that it has been reserved for a layman—a man of poetry and imagination—who went to them without being called to it by any duty, moved simply by the love of his fellow-man. He first learned their password in order to go and teach them the Lord's Prayer. He became initiated to them in order, in their turn, to initiate them to the Divine Redemption. He accepted brotherhood with them in the flesh in order to elevate them to that of the spirit. He studied their character, their customs and their language; all in order to hear them stammer a few Scriptural verses and to make them understand and put into practice some fragment of the "good tidings."

Borrow was for a long time in Spain, where he joined in the Gipsy existence without shelter, enduring the nightly removals, the rapid flights in the mountains, the fugitive gratification, the nourishment taken without future prospect, and the bed of dead leaves. But in spite of all this he did not succeed well with the Gitanos; probably because however industriously he may have sought to realise the modes of thought and feeling of this unique population he did not sufficiently fathom the prime cause of their abrupt disagreement with the innate ideas and sentiments of the generality of men. For want of knowing the facts which constitute the origination of the break, he did not realise in his own mind that the Gipsy is not atheistical but ignorant; and that there is no parallel to his case to be found in the whole world—no second example anywhere. It is known to him that many religions exist, because fragments of their dogmas have reached him from time to time; but he is indifferent to the whole of them, because in his view they all relate to something which does not concern him.

The Gipsy's Critics

4.—The Gipsy and Religion.

With regard to the multitude of religions, the curious feature about the Gipsy is that he admits the truth of every one of them. More strange still is the fact that he follows them in practice—one after another. He thinks them all true; especially the one he has just heard well expounded. Far from being incredulous, he takes the *Credo* of Christianity, Islamism, Brahmanism and Buddhism and believes it all with the simplicity of a rustic; though it would be more correct to say with the bright smile of astonished childhood, happy to be told so many beautiful things. Only; his belief in the many different accounts of heaven, hell and the whole supernatural world rests entirely upon the impression that this "heaven" which is variously said to be the abode of Christ, Mahomet, Brahmah or Buddha, is no affair of his.

So strong and indelible is the impression left upon them by the terrible *væ victis* of the Aryas when decreeing that they did not belong to the human race and that no god existed in heaven for them.

When once their dull intelligence had been thoroughly saturated with the idea that this statement was materially demonstrated by their state of inferiority and impotence, they had neither the force of abstraction or elasticity of mind to follow any other reasoning, and could not accordingly be persuaded of their confraternity with the rest of mankind, or admit the possibility of becoming in any sense equal to them, with the same god in heaven and the same rights on earth.

Will it be ever possible to prove to them the folly of their abdication and to convince them of the fraud by which it was brought about? Shall we ever be able to bring home to them the high dignity of their origin and the estimable value of their existence, redeemed by Divine Sacrifice, as also the unspeakable felicities of a hope beyond the grave in an eternally happy existence? We believe so.

By the very fact that the Pariah-Bohemians formerly and with such touching humility renounced all right to the possession of land and therefore to any special country for themselves, they are now in a position of having escaped the destruction which gradually has overtaken all those peoples who appropriated countries for themselves with which they became

identified—but who remained savage. It was because the Bohemians had no country to defend that war could not exterminate them; and not being exterminated they must necessarily be converted and civilised as the era of universal pardon approaches.

Moreover no savage people ever gave to their sentiments, however noble or pathetic, however appealing as belonging to the scale of primordial affections, parental, filial, conjugal, or fraternal; none, in fact, but the Bohemians were ever able to give to their sentiments an abstract sublimated and condensed expression in Art—an art of their own.

Never, as far as we are aware, have savages been known to discover *forms* which manifest their *emotions*; never have they possessed an *Epos*, a cycle of works recording in the language of art what they feel and suffer and love.

The Bohemians had an Art and created an Epopœia. The more the Christians become acquainted with that the more they will understand it; and the will once begotten, the knowledge will soon come of how to bring this race nearer to their Creator.

FRANZ LISZT.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Gipsy in History.

1.—First Period in Europe.

WE possess no more than the vaguest indications of the first appearance of the Gipsies on our continent, or of their first sojourn among the Christian nations. But the slight knowledge we obtain through ancient chroniclers presents us with the same picture in each country; and it is also one which is identical with what goes on under our own eyes. We are therefore obliged to conclude that, ever since we have known it, and probably ever since it assumed its present state, this race has changed in nothing—absolutely nothing; neither in language, type or habits. Such as we see them in Europe, such they always were in Asia and Africa, and now in the two Americas we find them again, precisely the same as they are with us. They change no more among the Mussulmans or the heathen than they do among the Orientals, or the Protestants, or Catholics. It might have been said of them that during the centuries of their contact with Christian legislation and manners, they had neither lost nor gained anything, but for the fact that during their stay in Hungary they have created an Art—a music of their own.

It is in the fourteenth century that we perceive the first traces of the Bohemians in Europe. They came in by way of Hungary, which, on that account alone, might well be regarded as their special European country; and at all events it was the centre from which they spread into all surrounding countries, east and west—Germany, Italy, England, France and Spain.

As to Egypt and Turkey, they claim to have been there before coming to Europe, and the same may probably be said of the Barbary States and Morocco.

The reason why the information we possess respecting the Bohemians is so fragmentary and so unsupported by proof is because the historians of Europe never condescended to mention these people, who for five centuries have been silently present amongst us, without taking part in any of our political vicissitudes. They have lived through every catastrophe as through every phase of fortune. They have passed through all the ways as through piping times of peace. They have caused no uneasiness to authorities or made attempt of any kind. It was entirely without any intention of disturbing the happy guests at the banquet of civilisation that they glided in in order to gather at their feet the crumbs falling from the table. They did this, pushed by hunger, thirst, nudity and cold, but the crumbs they gathered were taken only from animals to which they would otherwise have been given.

It was the countryman, the artisan, the great man in love, or great lady in intrigue, whose passions were exploited by the Bohemian. He found himself able to turn his rich imaginative power to great account by giving it these weaknesses to play upon, and accordingly he did so whenever they laid themselves open to his sly machinations.

Always ready with feigned respect for the police which in different coutries were like the religions all one to him, ready also with the same submission to all sovereigns as to the god of every nation, the Bohemian never troubled about his victims because they were always the dupes of their own bad passions. If he exploited the vices of some it was because incited thereto by the covetous insinuations of others, or if he had occasion to press one it was always to satisfy another. He was never at a loss for fabrication, a love-charm, a magical promise, a tempting prediction—anything for money; for as long as people ask for these things he clearly wanted them for business.

But on the other hand he very rarely used his gift for falsehood to entangle those who were not already masters of the lying art. He made a point of working to the rule:

To catch a rogue, one and a half,

and he therefore experienced a peculiar pleasure in trying his

hand upon the Jews, who, as far as cheating and roguery are concerned, have always found in the Bohemians their only masters. In this connection it is amusing to notice that the literature of the Little-Russian dialect of the Ukraine has adopted the feature just mentioned as the subject of one of its most entertaining stories; in which the Gipsy puts the Jewish trickster of the peasant through an amusing series of clever mystifications.* It is in this way that the Bohemians, without forming part of us, have lived amongst us in spite of persecutions and severities which would have long since caused the disappearance of a race less capable of resisting the hardships of a cruel destiny.

From the moment of the first appearance of the Bohemians on our continent a vague assimilation seemed to be established between them and the Israelites on account of the equal horror in which they were held. Prejudices accumulated in their disfavour, lying stories were told and a superstitious fear was created by their mode of life. The Jews were accused of stealing male children in order to sacrifice them in a sacrilegious performance of the Christian Eucharistic mystery.

There was a further accusation made against the Bohemians of stealing little girls in order to give them over to prostitution, and as a protection of their own women against Christian libertinage. If ever such accusations had been true it would have been necessary first to fix the fault by ascertaining who had first given provocation.

Christian society always distinguished too little between the Jew and the Gipsy in theory and too much in practice; in the respect that they gave the Jew the usual deference commanded by wealth and treated the Bohemians with all that gratuitous insult and disdain which is poverty's everyday portion. Thus,

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* We may mention among others a buffoonery in two volumes entitled

Jyd borodaty
y Cygan worowaty,

which may be translated also in rhyme as

Moses hairy
and Gipsy wary.

The book is written almost throughout in similar rhymes, and offers a series of comic scenes in which the greediness and cunning of the Israelite are always baffled and outwitted by the bold stroke and more inspired craftiness of the Gipsy.

notwithstanding that the Bohemian's vices were, however awkward, far less dangerous than those of the Jews, they were equally dreaded by those whom they approached.

For neither one nor the other was there any idea of creating a new country. They could neither be given a country to prepare and cultivate in the sense of being obliged to remain there, nor could they be encouraged by equal rights before the law to incorporate with other nations unless such an arrangement were coupled with the express condition of renouncing their old traditions.

That they could not be granted either alternative was undoubtedly due in great measure to religious intolerance, but in a still greater degree to the superstitious fear and unreasoning antipathy then prevailing.

2.—Under Charles III of Spain.

Charles III of Spain, who was a great lover of symmetry in architecture, as is proved by the beautiful monuments which he left behind him, did not extend his taste for straight ruling to the administrative domain. He understood that human sentiments cannot be as mechanically treated as stones which are cut and shaped and surfaced and placed or displaced at will, according to the requirements of a general plan; he knew, in short, that men are not to be classed like plants in a botanical garden. For that reason he carefully abstained from ordaining that the Bohemians should be this or that in the State according to his own good pleasure. On the contrary, he opened the door of his kingdom to them freely, inviting them to every advantage. Every Bohemian who had a fixed trade or profession was by that very fact to be considered a Spaniard; eligible for all the same rights and authorised to claim the same privileges.

In order to protect him socially it was to be forbidden to inquire into his birth or to use his origin by converting it into a term of reproach—such as by use of the term "Gitano." He was in future to enjoy all the benefits of society as soon as he had accepted the two inevitable charges, *labour* and *obedience.*

Borrow speaks at some length of the satisfactory and bene-

ficial influence which subsequent regulations conceived in the spirit of those of Charles III would have exercised. By himself this monarch could do no more than take the initiative and indicate by the first step the direction in which to follow, as all legislative influences require for their proper effect the passage of several generations.

What Borrow says gives a sort of dignity to the resolute abstention of the Bohemians from any peace with society otherwise than based on terms of equality. The proposition was set aside too quickly in Spain, and never at all proposed elsewhere.

There are still no Christians found to continue and to imitate the work of Borrow. There is no man to be found who will consent to speak fluently the Romany language and pass for one of their people. But until the Gipsy's bronzed complexion ceases to be any disgrace, and all his race are freely admitted to Christian equality by laws calculated to continue the work of fusion commenced by those of Charles III in Spain, he will always remain as he is. As long as laws expressly *for the Bohemians* survive, the Bohemian will not respect any law whatever.

In the history of humanity generations are as solidary as individuals, and nations as families. It follows therefore that some members of civilised society will be found to descend to a state of abjection equal to that into which the Paria-Bohemians have been precipitated. That state implies being relegated to the category of mere animals with human speech, drinking at their gutters and consuming any disgusting form of nourishment to which hunger may drive them—it implies, in short, the full extent of all their unspeakable privations. It means that they must endure all this before their heart can be softened. But surely where such wrongs and outrages have been most endured there should love and devotion be most abundantly outpoured.

The pride of the Gipsy seems to betoken a consciousness of having for an age-long period resisted the inhuman degradation of which the unjust principle of existence forced upon him has been the cause. But whether that is the case or not, the fact is that his sentiment seems to be one of a demand for satisfaction. He appears to be waiting for civilisation to moisten his lips at that same chalice of shame and pain of which he has so largely drunk, but now purified and ennobled

before proceeding to a complete reconciliation, in which pardon would imply a total cancellation of injury.

Throughout all persecution the Bohemian has remained a *man*. Had he not done so he would have been unable to prove himself a poet. That fact alone should suffice to make it clear that it is impossible for him to forget while society still remembers. And the remembrances include that he has been hunted like a wild beast, that his head has been placed at the mercy of any murderer, and that of the blood and tears that have been shed, as also of the hearts distressed, no estimation could ever be made.

Those hearts remained contented even in their distress as well as faithful to their companions, and are still creatures of God, though of their God they have been robbed.

3.—Under Maria-Theresa.

Inspired by religious sentiment and a praiseworthy feeling of humanity, Maria-Theresa occupied herself specially with the Bohemians. She wanted to put an end to their grievances and show an interest in their lot by providing it with a new basis and in herself arranging the conditions which probably she regarded as those of a sort of charter which she was about to grant.

But however benevolent the interest which this great sovereign placed at the pinnacle of affairs in Europe might take in the government of her faithful Hungary (infested, as she considered, by the presence of these hordes, caring for neither God nor man) it was radically impossible for her either to find leisure to inform herself, or to provide the opportunity of learning by what spirit these wretched people were animated; reduced as they were not merely to the lowest social stage, but below society altogether.

How could we expect her not to have regarded the Bohemians as the most desperate specimens of humanity when her entire nation and the whole of her councillors were of that opinion? How could it occur to her to ask who they were; or why they were what they were? Ages had confirmed the bad opinion entertained of them; their degraded extraction and mental condition seemed to be a fact too well proved to allow

of anyone entertaining any doubt respecting it. This pious queen had every intention of being good to them, and of showing pity for their condition. She thought she was giving proof of generosity and solicitude by undertaking to make of them compulsorily a special class of agriculturalists. They were to be violently taken from the attractions of their wandering, homeless life and baptised—with the police for godfather!

There is really nothing extraordinary that, after she had seen so much legal tinkering at the subject and after she had read and read again so many bulky documents on their account that these Bohemians were monsters of ingratitude not to feel honoured and happy to receive her benefits; the crumbs which had been graciously allowed to fall, in virtue of her royal decree, from the imperial table.

As her object in all measures was simply to ensure the good order of her States and the normal working of every element within her household, it follows naturally that so good a family-mother must have been terribly shocked to meet with nothing but difficulties and opposition in the very place where she had expected gratitude; even enthusiastic thankfulness, perhaps.

It could not, in fact, have transpired otherwise. As usually happens in such cases, she had no idea how the noble motive which had in the first place actuated her to take an interest in this insignificant branch of administration was unfortunately frittered away by the narrow, stingy way in which her liberal intentions were administered. The orders which she promulgated were duly taken in hand, but without any interest in discovering whether the means adopted for securing the end she had in view had been wisely chosen.

The Bohemians never refused to be baptised; looking upon baptism simply as a ceremony which, whether it did any good or not, could certainly do no harm. But they were not on that account any more tractable, or susceptible to any levelling rule which might be applied to them, or to any special demarcation of their position and social limits. When it was attempted to bring them forcibly under some classification recognised by the State, to register them under one or other denomination in the census of the different populations, they laughed outright at such clumsy efforts. They would not even take it seriously or consider for an instant that the advantages so unskilfully offered them were really intended in considera-

tion of their quitting their life of direct communion with Nature. That life, with its continual wave of change, its lightsome liberty of impulsive action and its right to languid periods of ease was too sacred in their eyes.

They therefore resisted the decrees which had been intended to solidify this, as it were, fluid people, meandering, running out, expanding, evaporating and condensing, no one knew how or why; and which could only be compared to that mysterious vapour of Cosmos which sometimes produces flaming meteors and sometimes fireballs.

Finding them so restive, the attempt was made forcibly to repress such audacious levity; not succeeding in which the authorities became infuriated and the Gipsies were pursued, tormented and tortured. The less they seemed to appreciate the improvements which had been prepared for them, the more they excited indignation, especially among the paltry officials who felt humiliated at having to bother themselves about such nobodies. They therefore represented them in high quarters as a noxious breed, having an interest in producing this effect which, however, it must be acknowledged was not difficult.

Out of flattery for the august law-giver and not to be obliged to admit that the laws had been badly drawn up by her councillors (which, by the way, they were far from conceding), calumnies and accusations began to furnish pretexts of which Bohemians were the object. In order to avoid having to confess that the laws had not succeeded, and to throw the fault upon the object of them rather than upon those who had fabricated them upon false data, the barbarous idea was to exterminate the people to whom they referred, since they did not choose to range themselves under the provisions given.* They suffered; resisting sometimes, and sometimes escaping. But they finished by wearing persecution out, without either allowing themselves to be destroyed or allowing themselves to cease to love that land of Hungary, where, before these events, they had always been less molested than elsewhere.

They did not regard the country itself as being responsible for these vexations, which, as of a passing nature, were not allowed to cause any change in either their affairs or them-

* See Grellmann, who depicts with indignation the persecutions of which they were the object after having been falsely accused of cannibalism.

selves. Time went on; but its scythe, though so powerful against everything erected by man's hand and consolidated with pains by his wisdom, had not the slightest effect upon the Gipsy's ancient and invariable habits of liberty, uncontrollable and ironically unconscious of its contemner.

It is astonishing that the worst persecution which the Bohemians have ever suffered from Christians should have happened at just the time when what their souls contained of truly noble was being translated by their art. It was, moreover, at the moment when that art was best understood, most esteemed and appreciated—nay, acclaimed with enthusiasm on the most brilliant summits of the highest European society. A phenomenon so difficult to foresee explains itself, however, if we examine it closely by the reactions which too accentuated influences always provoke.

It was towards the period of Maria-Theresa that Bohemian music had reached its apogee in Hungary after having slowly developed and splendidly expanded in that hospitable country, thanks to the sympathetic comprehension which it met there. For centuries the kings and princes of these countries had considered it the finest ornament of their festivals, as also the most solemn accompaniment of their sad hours. When, during a reign the prosperity of which was due to its generous enthusiasm, the Hungarian nobility were invited to take up their residence at Vienna, it bethought itself that it could not do better than introduce its great art to the court there, as well as to the great houses.

Now, see what happened. The more the Hungarian aristocracy assimilated Bohemian music up to the point of considering it a national art, the more heartily they applied themselves to initiating the Viennese aristocracy with the admiration they felt for it. In this, however, they met with very little success, because Asiatic blood or Magyar blood is wanted in the veins before the exquisite pleasure can be enjoyed of identification with the furious gaieties of the *Frischka* and with the dull desolations of the *Lassan.*

The Empress was naturally the first guest to admire what was called "the royal music" of Hungary and to hear its best orchestras made up of the best there were in the country as well as the most renowned virtuosi. Profoundly touched by so much talent and moved at realising the existence of so much genius, her gracious majesty conceived a heartfelt desire to ex-

tricate from its wild condition a race capable of producing such an art and such artists.

That was a misfortune; for at that time it was but very imperfectly known that the arts in general and music particularly, reproduce, each in its own way, the interior state or psychological level of the surroundings amidst which it is born, developed and allowed to expand until it becomes an object of general admiration.

The common view regarding the predominance of certain arts in any given country was that it was a question of chance, or at all events one depending upon natural causes, such as a more perfect sight, a more delicate ear, a more beautiful voice, and so forth, precisely as we speak of gastronomical products like the hams of Westphalia, the *pâté de foie gras* of Strasburg, the truffles of Perigord, and so on. In each case the idea is that products are more excellent there where the site offers the best material for their fabrication. In accordance with this notion, Gipsy virtuosity was regarded as an ability due to some subtlety of organisation, which Nature could have as easily made to consist in a talent for making better shoes or embroideries than other people, better jewels or better cakes.

Whilst such a poor conception of the expression of Art's language prevailed, and such a low idea of what it inspires and expresses was entertained, how could the Viennese court judge Bohemian art as it should be judged by the significance of the emotions which it translated, and by the value of Bohemian feeling which found in it the only possible means of emerging to the light of day, and unfolding itself to the rest of mankind?

The intention of Maria-Theresa was excellent; one of almost maternal solicitude. Some day the Bohemians themselves will give her credit for it, if ever they arrive at the comprehension of what history is and take some interest in their own, at all events in Hungary. It was not the fault of this remarkable woman who was the first of the sovereigns we have known actively virtuous if her Christian intentions took a contrary direction in passing through the bureaucratic draw-plate. The stiff character thus acquired took no account of the Bohemian temperament, but treated these people whose innate capacities so evidently rendered them capable of becoming such finished artists as mere *human flesh.*

The strange idea which had been conceived by the whole bureaucratic class was that the Bohemian race was composed entirely of vagabonds corrupted by idleness. It was held to be a necessity that their folly and crime should be repressed, and to that end, whether they would or no, it was imperative that they should be brought within the strict limits of official classification.

Treated in this way we may, if allowed to borrow a convenient expression from chemistry, describe the Bohemian material as "resistant." Nothing was done and no action was taken respecting them. Time, having continued its course, now finds them long after the Maria-Theresa period in exactly the same position as they were before.

PART III.

GIPSY MUSIC AND MUSICIANS.

CHAPTER XXV.

Historical Data.

1.—Early records of Bohemian musical renown.

AT the time of the return from Jerusalem of King Andrew II, in 1219, the writers who recorded his expedition already speak of the presence of Gipsies in that country. During the reign of Ladislas, from 1272 to 1290, we gather from similar sources that their number had considerably increased. The earliest authors who occupy themselves with the subject describe them as given up to a wandering life; exercising, here and there, the trade of blacksmith; but principally renowned as excellent musicians.

This gives rise to the conjecture that, even at that early period, they were already in request to provide the requisite orchestra on the occasion of festivals and solemnities of the Magyar court and nation.

The very silence of historians (who could not be expected to follow the achievements of remarkable musical executants) might be interpreted as proceeding from the general acceptance of this fact; since no surprise is expressed when they come to record the universal admiration excited by Gipsy music in the early years of the fifteenth century. We may cite, as an example, the festivals given Emmerich-Thurzo; which, at Tokay, lasted three days, and at Biken an entire month. At the diets of Rokosz and Hatvan in 1525 the celebrity of the greatest Bohemian players had risen still higher.

Tinödy mentions a Bohemian, native of Lippe, named Demetrius Karman, as a virtuoso of extraordinary talent, par-

ticularly under the protection of Beg Uluman (1550); who was so enthusiastically impressed by his genius that he showered riches upon him. Tinödy adds:

> Although there was an abundance of excellent Bohemian players at that date, none of them could equal Karman. It would certainly be very interesting to discover when and how the violin came to be so held in honour by these bands.

In 1599, when Michel the Woywode of Wallachia made his entry into Karlstadt in Transylvania with Asiatic pomp, and a luxury leaving behind it copious remembrances which were minutely related by contemporary writers, the procession was headed by ten Bohemians playing a triumphal march; and this item was evidently considered as worthily entering into the list of sumptuosities provided for the occasion.

The small number of these musicians must be specially noted; for, evidently, they could not have made much noise, especially on the march! Since they could be content with so small an orchestra upon so solemn an occasion, it follows that, in Hungary, musical cultivation must have already gone far beyond the barbarism still prevailing in the far east; where symphonic interest consists in making the utmost noise possible, by coupling the most incongruous instruments; the performers upon which play whatever they please without troubling in the least about what their neighbour is doing.

The Bohemians had already made their audiences understand that they should attach infinitely more importance to the quality than to the quantity, when instruments were combined. Might one not reasonably wish on behalf of many a present-day European audience (who delight in listening to military bands and to the music given at fashionable popular concerts) that they had as much good taste?

If our public were as advanced in this respect in the nineteenth century as the Bohemians already were in the fifteenth, they would willingly give up these colossal masses of instruments; for the sake of better appreciating the delicacy, individuality and expression—in short, the signification of each instrument individually. In a human crowd of any description, even of instruments, there is always less euphony than clatter; in smaller numbers all men, whether virtuosi or other, know better how to express or sing whatever is sublime; instead of being constrained to shout it.

It appears that at the end of the sixteenth century, and even later, Bohemian musicians accompanied the army chiefs to war, like the ancient Scandinavian poets; which is a souvenir of considerable historical value.

But the grandest period of Bohemian music, its golden age, was undoubtedly the eighteenth century. At that time the adulation and proofs of enthusiastic appreciation by which its principal representatives were surrounded were at least equal to the similar homage with which, more recently, Paganini, Sivori, Ernst, de Beriot, Vieuxtemps and Joachim were treated.

One of the most conspicuous figures of this period was Michel Barnu, attached as artist to the person of Csaky; who was so persuaded of his indisputable superiority over all contemporary rivals that he was bold enough to provoke a musical contest—a sort of renewal of the Wartburg idea—which took place between Barnu and the principal violinists of the period.

Twelve of the best players were selected for the attempt to wrest the pre-eminence from Barnu; or, at all events, to dispute it with him. These artists were principally taken from those in the service of the nobility of that time; who claimed to have as good musicians in their service as the Cardinal. But the result was that, instead of being conquered, Barnu issued from the contest with an increase of reputation. Thereupon, the Cardinal sent for the best painter he could find, in order that the features of Barnu should be preserved for posterity; ordering that he should be taken in court uniform, and in the colours of his house. His Eminence was evidently proud to have such a distinguished musician in his service, and pleased to play the part of a Mæcenas towards him. Beneath the portrait he caused a Latin inscription to be placed meaning

"The Hungarian Orpheus,"

and the picture was hung in one of the saloons of his residence, the castle of Radkau, in the comitat of Zips, where it remains to this day.

The fact of one of the jousts of troubadours between celebrated Bohemians, similar to the more famous similar encounters of the Middle Ages among the provincial troubadours and German poets, being a substantiated historical event, is

sufficient to prove the importance which, at all events in Hungary, was attached to the Bohemian art; cultivated, as it was, exclusively by that race. At the Csaky tournament only Bohemian virtuosi took part, in consequence of the view that they alone were able to compete with one another.

Several conclusions may be drawn from this event; for the estimation in which the whole subject of debate was held, and the importance attached to it, is shown by the fact of such highly-placed personages being so deeply interested in it. Such an occurrence also makes it evident that highly-talented musicians must have been very plentiful; for them to be able to select as many as twelve, each one of whom must obviously have been thought capable of disputing the position with the most renowned violinist of the time. The value of the favour in which this fortunate artist was held may be gathered from the fact that his fortune reached an almost fabulous amount; due entirely to the rich gifts of his various exalted patrons.

In 1772 a woman named Csinka Panna also appeared and acquired great renown by her virtuosity upon the violin. She commenced playing with ability at a very early age; and, at fourteen, married a Bohemian; who, being also a musician, as well as her two brothers, enabled her easily to form a family-orchestra; which, in a short time, had acquired much reputation and reaped a corresponding success. Csinka Panna suffered from a slight deformity; but her countenance was extremely engaging, and she was greatly esteemed for her honourable conduct, her graceful manners and the neatness and good order of her household; the latter quality being one which, as associated with sedentary tastes and occupations, is especially one not often to be met with amongst the women of her nation. She came originally from Gomar; the seigneur Langi having provided her with lessons at a very early age, on account of having been attracted by observation of her remarkably precocious talent.

This benevolent interest continued after her marriage; for he then had a little dwelling constructed for her on the banks of the river Sabajo. But, although she kept this extremely well, she stayed there only during the winter portion of the year; preferring to pass the rest of the time in tents, which she had set up at a short distance away and nearer the water.

Her death gave rise to such a feeling of mourning that numberless verses, both in Latin and Hungarian, were written; in

which not only her loss as an artist was deplored, but honour given to her womanly virtues. Much value was attached to the poetic expression of these unanimous regrets; and a goodly number of such effusions (the total of which must have been very large, for on the first news of her death the country was inundated with them) are still preserved.

It has sometimes been thought that, at this period, the Bohemian artists (who were necessarily inventive, since the improvisation of florid ornamentation is an essential part of their style) were composers also; and that, therefore, in addition to ornamenting melodies, they invented them. There is nothing to justify such a supposition. Their ignorance of the notation did not allow of their preserving an authentic version of their works, and we possess no document whatever worthy of any faith containing these productions; which we must believe to have been precious, judging by the enthusiasm which they invariably excited.

Hiripi, Sugar, Galantear, Baczar and many others continued the glorious line which is now represented by Paticarius, Sarkoczy, Heczkematy and others; who are prominent figures among the Bohemian bands of our time and are justly renowned at Pesth.

2.—The rival claimants.

The most ancient monument of Hungarian music which we possess—one manifestly composed by a Hungarian—is the collection of melodies made by Tinödy Stephens. Of these there was a remarkable set published at Klausenburg in 1554; which it will be necessary for us to examine.

The first question arising with regard to it is—

How is it possible at the present day to distinguish between melodies simply borrowed and those which, in the act of being reproduced, have been laboriously disfigured?

And further—

How far was Stephens really inspired by the music he had heard from childhood; or rather, how far was he lacking the quality of inspiration?

What we may safely note, at all events, is that there is nothing in our possession at all conducive to the belief that

Stephens was an author held in any particular esteem by his contemporaries.

But there cannot be much need to pile up conjectures on this subject, as we may very well make ourselves content with the general verdict respecting it. All competent authorities agree that this collection is of no value; and that, whether his melodies are sickly compositions or sickly reminiscences, their only present merit or utility is as historic relic or interesting curio.

Now, can we admit that such a collection as this would have been possible if the Hungarian nation had inherited the entirely special musical gift essential for the creation of an art as original as that of which we are treating? It must be remembered that this is an art distinguished by a predominating sentiment met with in no other; and by a form quite distinct from that in which European art elsewhere was then clothed. Moreover, this was the case notwithstanding that the time of which we are speaking was the most flourishing period of the contrapuntal schools, both Flemish and Italian.

Can we therefore admit that there would not have been found within the Hungarian race (especially in such heroic times for musical art) gifted artists who would have been able to distinguish themselves to a sufficient extent to leave a name behind them; and thus vie with the Bohemians, whose celebrity, as we have seen, stands fully upon record?

We may be sure that there would have been both renowned composers and celebrated virtuosi had the art of Bohemian music been really implanted in the Hungarian nature. But it was precisely the contrary which happened; as we shall see.

For want of a knowledge of the notation and power of writing it—for want therefore of manuscript as well as of regular means of publication, there was no Bohemian composer in the proper sense of the word; for no member of any Zigani orchestra appropriated to himself any one motive rather than another. Moreover, how could it have served them had these conditions been different?

Did they not all well know that the value of the melody was little in itself, compared with what it is capable of becoming, as rendered with the accentuation given to it by the virtuoso; who declaims it and sets it off with his own original ornamentation. It may, in fact, be compared to an ingot of gold; which remains in the condition of a mere piece of metal, until the art of the chaser has converted it into a jewel of in-

estimable price; forming it according to his fancy, colouring it with the various tints of a rich enamel, and setting within it pearls and diamonds.

As long as a Bohemian melody has not been thus set off it is like a pretty naked infant, not yet prepared to exercise a real influence upon hearts. In order to dominate them like an absolute sovereign it must be royally draped by declamation; and assume all the jewels showered upon it by the magic wand of the conjuror—the bow of the violinist. For this reason it would be superfluous to regret the absence of Bohemian *composers;* in view of the innumerable company of their virtuosi.

From the very earliest times these virtuosi were never Magyars; they were always Bohemians, of pure race. They had come directly from the camp of their tribes, where they lived in tents habitually with the others; partaking alike the mobility of their halts, their wanderings through the forests, their food, their unknown festivals and their nights in the open air. All this was merely quitted for a short time, when they came amongst the Magyars to enchant and ravish them, by playing at their celebrations and on other ceremonial occasions.

In a statistical and political journal published in Vienna in 1775 under sanction of the government we find a notice on the subject of the Zigani, very carefully prepared, and in which we read these lines:

> We could cite many examples and also some remarkable facts tending to show how superior the Bohemians are in music and that they have fully retained their ability to the present day; but, for fear of fatiguing our readers by digressions of this kind we shall content ourselves therefore in naming a few individuals who have rendered themselves celebrated in this art by becoming masters in it, by way of showing to what a point this people is gifted with happy dispositions for music.

This might cause one to think that in the last century, as, for instance, in 1775, the Hungarians had still no idea of regarding Bohemian music as their own.

At this period, when the Magyars were so considerately treated, almost petted, by the government of the empress, who never forgot that she owed her crown to the fidelity of her noble Magyar subjects with their

> Moriamur pro rege nostro Maria Theresa,

it is certain that no one would have disputed the honour, if

they had shown the least inclination towards aspiring to it. That was a time for refusing nothing to them; although there was the same readiness to treat them roughly shortly afterwards.

In addition to all this, we know of no ancient author who, in speaking of the gift for music which nature has imparted to the Bohemians, makes any mention of the Magyar-nationality of their airs, in describing them as simple executants of Hungarian melodies.

Monsieur Gabriel Mattray, the learned and renowned librarian of Pesth, who rendered marked service to this branch of musical literature by his researches and by his publications, shows publicly an evident leaning to the supposition which prevails at the present moment. He desires to attribute to the Magyar race this product so evidently proper to the Zigani. This, however, did not prevent our receiving from him, one day, the following lines on this very subject:

The Hungarians of easy and elevated social position never devoted themselves to the national Hungarian music and specially avoided composition in this style, which accounts for Hungarian music having been preserved and popularised only by Bohemians.

Further on he adds:

It would be difficult to meet any populous district in Hungary without its band of Bohemian musicians, established somewhere in the neighbourhood.

This testimony of our honoured compatriot, who in the circumstances cannot be suspected of any partiality for the Bohemians, confirms our opinion as to what is due to them in respect of invention of their national art.

The reader will easily recognise that, when the gift of the creation or reproduction of an art has been granted to any people by nature, there are no accessory considerations either of social or any other kind which can prevent its artists from making their works known and valued. The true life of the artist residing much less in his feeble body than in the sentiment inspiring the thought which his art produces, he would prefer to die rather than not identify himself with the manifestation of his better self,

sein besseres Ich,

which he has deposited in his work as the fruit of his genius, heart and soul.

If, therefore, it is necessary to confess that, formerly, there were no Magyars who either claimed Bohemian music as their own or devoted their lives to its execution and to the attainment of the virtuosity required, it follows that their music belongs to the Bohemians; who look upon it as their sole and sanctified inheritance, and who give themselves up to its cultivation as a sublime mission directed to their ennoblement and rehabilitation amongst themselves.

To sum up, there are in our opinion, two facts equally conclusive for those who incline to the view that the music played by Bohemians is an art of which they may justly claim the paternity.

The first is that, ever since the most ancient times of which we have any record in Hungary, the chroniclers already speak of Bohemian musicians and never of any others—neither Magyar, Slav nor Jew.

The second is the fact of the musical organisation of the Bohemian race being everywhere recognised. They have always and in every situation exhibited a passion for this art; which constantly figures prominently amongst their most lively pleasures, and has never been absent from any exhibition of their talents given before audiences assembled for the purpose.

Surely we may conclude from these two concordant circumstances that their musical faculties are not confined to the sole gift of reproduction.

3.—The Division of honour.

But, even if the Bohemians had only been possessed of merit to a far less degree than that required by music in which it is the ornamentation and change of colour depending upon the power of extemporisation which forms so great a part of its value; even if they were merely textual executants like our own, but still capable of exciting that enthusiasm which we see evidenced by the manner in which they were everywhere fêted, admired and exalted—even then, we should be scarcely able to dispute their title to the better half of the glory of an art owing all its prominence to them.

Should anyone desire to contest this position we should like to ask—

What is a virtuoso? Is he really no more than an intelligent machine, whose two hands are a couple of levers doing the business of a barrel-organ? Is his task so mechanical as to render it unnecessary for him to think or feel in satisfactorily performing it? Is his duty confined to producing for the ear, as it were, a photograph of the notes he is looking at?

Alas! We know only too well how many so-called virtuosi there are who are not even able to translate the thought contained in the originals they place upon their desk, or to deliver it integrally without mutilation of the sense. How many amongst them there are whose knowledge of art is confined to the mere trade—how many, indeed, who do not even know the trade!

It must be confessed that their number is legion. But usurpation, however victorious in the material sense of possession, has no effect upon the rights of a just owner. Those who make a mere business out of virtuosity are far more plentiful than it would be natural to suspect; especially by a public already depraved by these illegitimate and worse than ignorant would-be sovereigns.

As matters stand, the public is no longer in a position to judge; which is no more than might be expected after their taking pleasure in being led astray by the vulgar feats of these mountebanks, with their mechanical wonders upon the violin, piano, guitar and (most horrible of all) the cornet. When, therefore, a real master displays before them some prodigy of art, they cannot appreciate the distinction and realise that the master is acting in the name of a marvellous privilege granted to him by nature—a privilege similar to that traditional one by virtue of which the kings of France are supposed to have cured scrofula, by the mere act of touching those who suffered from it. Such powers are not acquired, being only exercised by "right divine."

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Claims of Bohemian Virtuosity.

1.—On Virtuosity in general.

THE words virtuosity and virtue have both their origin in the Latin *vir*; the exercise of one as much as the other being an act of masculine power. Whoever has not the faculty of engendering an ideal type, fruit of the transports of his love for ideal beauty, can neither be virtuose nor virtuous. He must know how to impose respect and admiration for the beautiful; and should be the author of good works or actions—whether these belong to art or morality makes no difference; as these are but two aspects of the same thing, two sexes of the one species.

Thus, the Good, in the same way as the Beautiful, is the incarnation of the human soul due to the energy of its desires and resolves. Do we not, as a matter of fact, interchange the terms, when we speak of an action belonging to the Good as a *beautiful* action, and of a production emanating from the order of the Beautiful as a *good* work?

This amounts to an unconscious admission that the Good and the Beautiful can never be radically detached one from the other; every good deed being beautiful by that very fact, and every beautiful work being good by the same reasoning.

The virtuoso is not a mason; who, taking blocks of stone and with square, level and trowel in hand, (a conscientious and exact proceeding), constructs the poem which the architect has already designed upon the paper. He is not a passive instrument, reproducing the thoughts and feelings of others

whilst adding nothing of his own. He is not a reader, more or less expert, delivering a text; without marginal notes or glossary, and requiring no interlinear commentary.

Musical works which have been dictated by inspiration are, fundamentally, only the touching or tragic *scenario* of feeling, which it appertains to the executant to cause, by turns, to disclaim, sing, weep, sigh or adore; as also to pride himself and take pleasure in the accomplishment. The virtuoso is therefore just as much a creator as the writer; for he must virtually possess, in all their brilliancy and flagrant phosphorescence, the written passions to which he has undertaken to give life.

To him it also falls to give life and animation to the inert body of his text, as well as to vary the tints of its glances and turn the whole presentment into that of a goddess of grace. To him, again, it falls to change a mute and motionless form into a living being, a seductive Galatea; and to endow the still lifeless form with an adamantine nature into which he may infuse life at his own given moment. It follows that, of all artists, the virtuoso is not only directly called upon, but perhaps more directly than any other, to reveal the subjugating strength of the gods; and from whom it is expected that the inspiring muse can never have any secrets.

To judge by the pitch at which the science of æsthetics has arrived nowadays, there cannot be any thinker or any cultivated mind familiar with the arts, either by long and intimate practice or by theoretical speculation, who would not consider it amount to a frightful barbarism to omit Dramatic Art from the list of those entitled autonomous; which is what would practically happen in denying the comedian or tragedian the privilege of *creation*. This privilege consists in the introduction by the artist quite independently, *as by right of birth and conquest*, of graces concomitantly with his innate gift and his enthusiastic labour.

The dramatic art possesses no less than the right of life and death over those works which have only to be touched by the breath of his lips to become either eloquent and inflamed, or pale and declining, as his action may dictate. It is he also who possesses the exorbitant power of either allowing the thoughts entrusted to him to perish, or of infusing into them a life incomparably more intense than that by which he is

himself animated. He pours into the dead letter that vivifying spirit which is as that which the Creator poured into the clay of Adam's body—the soul made in his own image and resemblance. Surely, then, what he does is well worthy of being called an art.

Is not the life he gives to a work one conceived after his own image and resemblance?

Could he be said to have "created" a dramatic rôle unless he had conceived it in a manner so peculiar to himself that, although another might imitate it, he could never appropriate it entirely?

How can the origin of his Art in a Muse be doubted when inspiration is so evidently essential to it?

It was by reason of this being so that the Greeks, who had such a fine intuition of everything concerning the arts or proceeding from them, gave Thalia and Melpomene as patrons to interpreters as well as to genius; to Æschylus and Sophocles as to Aristophanes and Menander.

Now the virtuoso or musical artist does for music exactly what the actor or dramatic artist does for the stage; or, in other words, for the poem, whether tragic or comic, of an author. The virtuoso possesses the same right of life and death over the works the interpretation of which is entrusted to him, with their thoughts, sentiments and emotions; for the expression of all these, being part of interpretation, is for the moment committed to his care. He can endow them with a glorious life, similar to that enjoyed by the heroes in the Elysian fields; or he can allow them, or even cause them, to die a death equally ignominious and ridiculous.

How could it possibly be maintained that the virtuoso is not the representative of an art so evidently his own; because so different from that of the author, who dictated the mere words by writing what the performing artist reproduces? The virtuoso, when addressing himself simply to the sense of hearing of his audience, does for his author precisely the same as the actor who addresses himself to both sight and hearing.

That Dramatic Art is an art apart, no person of discretion any longer denies. It is related to music by its use of the voice; to sculpture by that of gesture and attitude; to painting by employing the assistance of colour; and to pantomime by depending upon movement. On the other hand, it follows

that, as the musician makes no appeal to the sense of sight, upon which these last depend, his art bears no direct relation to any of them.

In return, however, the theatre is fatal to each of the arts just mentioned.

It is, for example, fatal to painting, because it employs the coarsest and loudest tints as well as the most violent contrasts; besides being obliged to have recourse to illuminations which are unnatural. And it is fatal to sculpture, by the very fact of movement involving change of attitude.

The fact is that dramatic art being obliged, like all plastic art, to take Nature for its model, is nevertheless obliged to transfigure it according to its means of expression. Its own resources must be used as far as they will extend, in order to compensate for the lack of what in Nature is inimitable.

But it is a matter of common consent that any plastic art which, instead of aspiring to draw its inspiration directly from Nature, should seek to do so from the stage, would inevitably thereby become (to whatever extent this might be practised) adulterate and degenerate; and would thereby lose all legitimate title to noble rank. The truth of this becomes evident at once if we reflect that the worst criticism which can be passed upon art—a criticism implying that it has already entered upon a period of decline is to say:

"It has become *theatrical*."

2.—*The Bohemian Virtuoso in particular.*

If we consider the matter from the point of view of self-sufficiency and independence, the virtuoso has every advantage over the actor; whom the painter, sculptor and mimic can alike afford to ignore and forget. And not only these; for even the dramatic poet is not confined to drama and has the power, whenever he chooses, of quitting his imaginary world and of immortalising himself in that of poetry, unassisted by dramatic action. Moreover, such poetry, even though it may be less luminous and less emotional, is, on the other hand, less ephemeral and less subject to vicissitudes of the moment. Its faculty of dispensing with the dramatic artist is also so com-

plete that the exercise of its control over the human heart is capable of continuing into far-off ages. Thus, in time to come, even when its language has long ceased to be that of the people, and is only understood by men of superior refinement and education, they will require no interpreters to enable them to enjoy its genius, verve or sentiment.

But the musical composer is far from being in the enjoyment of this position; for he cannot live, and therefore there can be no question of his survival without the help of the executant. Libraries are no resting-places for musical art-works, however well they may serve that purpose for thought, silent but fruitful. The special tabernacle for the musical composer's productions is the human soul, where they exist only while the soul retains their impression; for, as soon as memory allows that impression to escape, they are gone.

It would even be vain for the archæologist to try to galvanise into life musical works of a past age; for, when acoustical means and habits have become profoundly modified—when even manners of feeling are not the same, having become more gentle or more imperious, broader or more refined—how can hearts of the present day identify themselves with those of a former generation?

In short, without the virtuoso the composer's existence would be a perpetual hell; his creative genius being unable by itself either to actuate what it conceived or to objectify that by which it is filled. It cannot make its presence evident,* or show what animates its pulse, lights up its imagination, occupies its thought, or absorbs its being. Unless all this is displayed before him either by the human voice, by an instrument, or by an orchestra, the musician would be in an eternal state of travail, without hope of deliverance. He would be in the unfortunate position of experiencing a love, while being condemned never to know the object of his inspiration—the most terrible punishment of the damned.

Those who are not composers are totally unable to realise what it is for a musician of genius to have no executants—in other words, not to be able to hear himself. It would be necessary to ask Berlioz or Wagner in their younger years (or

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* In the original we have the German words *sich vergegenwärtigen* added in parenthesis by way of elucidation.

equally any other composers before them) what it was to have felt and thought in music and to have no opportunity of judging the work evolved by their sentiment or formulated by their thought.

These reflections amply bear out our statement and show that it is rigorously true to say that both tragedy and comedy are infinitely less dependent upon the artists which represent them than music must ever be upon the executants who give it life. The virtuoso engenders the music anew and in his turn. He gives it a palpable and perceptible existence, and by that act he establishes the claim of his art to be ranked with those called autonomous.

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It was Bohemian virtuosi who festooned Bohemian melody with their florid ornaments seeming to throw upon each, as it were, the prism of a rainbow or the scintillation of a multi-coloured sash. It was Bohemian virtuosi who brought out the various rhythms, whether sharply-cut or softly cadenced; whether lightly detached or gracefully linked together; which give to their music its profile and its attitude. They alone have interpreted this art, as alone could artists who understand its language; including all its secret murmurings and asides.

Hence, we may conclude that, if the shepherds have played these melodies upon their chalumeaux, or if the herdsmen have whistled them upon their pipes, or if the metisiers have sung the same motives in chorus, it is still the Bohemians who have given them their value in art, their illustration and their renown, by their marvellous execution coupled with the sentiment which they alone have known how to infuse.

Whoever may have been the first inventors of these melodies or the first creators of their scale—whoever may have been the first to employ these intervals or the initiators of these rhythms or adornments—whether they were Hindoos or Magyars; men hallucinated by the sacred waters of the Ganges or loving the green waters of the Danube, the Bohemians have none the less a right to claim this music as their own; since they alone have given it life, enabling it to move the soul and electrify the heart of man.

At the present moment there are many Hungarians who, as amateurs, exploit this kind of art; but there were none such to

be remarked at the time of its formation. It is only since this music has attained its zenith that we meet with Hungarians who either compose in its style or cultivate it as performers; doing both it must be acknowledged with honour and success. Yet, after all, they constitute only a small group; and one of little or no influence in comparison with the mass of Bohemian virtuosi who have practised it for ages. This is all the more striking when we consider the importance of the fact that the general virtuosity of the Bohemians of Hungary has imprinted upon these works a remarkable unity and a rare homogeneity —in fact, that it has immortalised them by its genius of conception and reproduction.

When the style (even though it should consist merely in execution as being the living feature which gives to an art its individuality, or, as we may call it, its official certificate of existence) is not the immediate expression of the artist's soul it never can bear any special imprint. But it is admitted that the Zigano music has a style with so remarkable a special imprint that it is nowhere else to be met with. Its expression of Bohemian sentiment is too manifest and its adaptation to the Bohemian type too close for it to be anything else than a pure Bohemian art.

Moreover, it claims this character alike by its origin and by the renown which it exclusively owes to Bohemian virtuosity.

3.—Light upon the Magyar-Gipsy controversy.

In emitting these ideas and in grouping these various items of evidence our intention is very far from desiring to express any doubt respecting the musical faculties of the Magyars. A long study of Bohemian art convincing us that it is inspired by Bohemian sentiment, we are persuaded that, if facts little esteemed in political history and therefore now completely beyond research could have been reconstituted, they would certainly have proved the Bohemians to be not only poets in performance but also in creation.

Besides that, we are also of the view that whenever the principal arguments in a debate consist on both sides merely of likelihood, hypothesis and conjecture, it is quite allowable to give importance to those based upon physiological and psycho-

logical reasons; because the latter, although they may be more uncertain in appearance are not so in reality; for the reason that they are less likely to lead us astray than unsubstantiated historical statements.

The music called Bohemian both contains elements, and expresses a feeling, far too savage to admit of its being the product of a people such as the Magyars have always been. In dealing with this trait one cannot avoid contrasting the essentially versatile and nomadic character of the Bohemians with the eminently plodding sedentary character of the Magyars, and this we now proceed to do.

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Having arrived in Hungary over two thousand years ago, the Magyars immediately decided to establish themselves and remain; this resolution being as firm and imperturbable as that of which the Aryans gave proof four or five thousand years ago when they settled in the land embraced by those two gigantic rivers, the Indus and Ganges.

No sooner had the Magyars erected their tents in a country the aspect of which seemed to offer them welcome (after having quitted their previous home for some reason unknown, but which was probably either surplus of population or internal discord) than they abandoned all further desire for a wandering or adventurous existence. They were just like travellers who, having embarked upon a voyage, no sooner reach their destination than they methodically proceed to a permanent settlement; leaving behind them all thoughts of the life which had occasioned their removal.

Now, what can there be in common between such a people as this and the Bohemians—a race which can never be induced to settle anywhere, and who never show the least desire to remain in any particular place?

As soon as the Magyars had exchanged their shelters of skins for stone houses, their precarious encampments for cities and towns well built and fortified, they at once became a stable nation, regularly established. They proved themselves to be both speculative and practical by showing they knew both how to govern and to respect government; and by keeping ready for war, whilst laws were being passed to favour the permanent establishment of peace. They became philosophical, highly civilised and attained a superior degree of educa-

tion. On the other hand, they were also pompous and royal, and may well be described as a nation magnificently constituted and organised; dating from the glorious reign of St. Stephen, the first Apostolic Majesty, to whom the present Emperor of Austria actually owes that grand title.

It certainly, therefore, cannot be the Magyar race which has created and fashioned an art the true sense of which is precisely contrary to all these sentiments. But to say that the sense of this art is in direct opposition to the interior ideal of the Magyars is to recognise that ideal as incorporated in a grand nationality; forming a State both honourable and held in honour; well defended and administered; esteemed by its allies, respected by its rivals and feared by its enemies.

Finally, therefore, let us ask what trait all this can be found to present in common with what Bohemian music says or sings —a music which tells only of extreme sentiments, disordered instincts and extravagant desires?

And how can we compare the firm and tranquil ideal of a Christian nation like the Magyars always were with the furious and incoherent ideal of Bohemian music; always fleeing and always pursued, until breathless; always either in tears without reason, or in joy without cause?

At the same time it must be fully recognised, as we have always urged that, if the Bohemians had not been planted in the midst of a nation so cultivated as the Magyars—if Bohemian music had not been welcomed, warmed and vivified by them, it would probably have perished from inanition. Hungary certainly acted generously in, as it were, following the Roman custom of adoption; by, in this instance, adopting a child which from birth, gave every sign of a weak and ailing existence. A wise intuition, caused by a warm impulse of the heart gave rise in her to the presentiment that, with time, this child would grow up beautiful. Accordingly, she gave it the family name with right of inheritance; she attached it to her household, drank with it out of the same cup, made libations to the same household gods, and so completely mixed up its existence with her own, that at last the difference in their blood was no longer distinguishable.

It is in consequence of the Hungarians having taken such a considerable share in the development of this art that they cannot quite decide what belongs to them. They have so in-

timately associated themselves with it by their enjoyment of it, by their numerous collections of works belonging to it, and by such frequent and successful attempts to compose in its style that, at the present time, there are composers of Magyar blood who think themselves equal to the heroes of Bohemian virtuosity.

But all this only proves what follows naturally from the mere existence of this music in our midst; namely, that our nation, with its proud, vivacious and dreamy qualities, as well as with its musical organisation, was more susceptible than any other to the inspiration of this art—more apt to comprehend and to be imbued with it.

4.—The real Magyar claim.

The solution of the problem to which the foregoing appertains seems, however, when regarded from another point of view, to lose its principal importance. For what we have advanced regarding the correlation between the music and the soul of the Bohemians would neither be strengthened if historic evidence proved to be in our favour nor weakened in the contrary case; virtuosity having by itself its own poetic and creative powers.

Let us ask therefore:

Why trouble whether the first linear trace of the monument mutually erected by Bohemian and Magyar—whether the first loving kiss of this happy union was conferred by this one or that? The art itself is there for our enjoyment; and, without both one and the other, it would never have been able to live, grow up and develop as it has done. Would it not be idle to wish to disperse the shadow which fate seems purposely to have thrown over its origin since there is no possibility of the question being ever irrevocably decided; in view of the lack of absolute proof by means of well-authenticated historical fact? Moreover, neither the interests of art nor those of national vanity are therein engaged; since it is evident that in Hungary between the adopter and the adopted, whatever they were originally, a complete identification has been established. One has been so completely penetrated by the other; which, in its turn, has been so electrified by a lucid divination, that both

have an equal share in the honour; and that the latter, henceforth, is simply that of having mutually brought this art to its high perfection.

Even those who continue to sustain that it was the Magyars who taught the Bohemians their music will scarcely deny that it was the Ziganis alone who rescued it from the piecemeal and fragmentary condition in which the traditions of the national music of other countries have remained. This is quite consistent with the admission that the Bohemians, although proprietors alike of their scale, their style and their ornamentation, would never have cultivated it in the same degree if their rich and powerful hosts (*bene natus et possessionatus*, as was formerly said), had not provided the occasion by their various forms of appreciation.

Thus Bohemian art can never be separated from Hungary, whose arms it must for ever bear on seal and banner. To Hungary it owes a life passed entirely within its limits and in its atmosphere. To Hungary also the attainment of its virility and maturity are due; dependent as these were upon appreciation of its noble elements. It has also Hungary to thank for supply of its greatest needs—comprehension and sympathy. The haughtiness of its rhythms, their imposing dignity and sudden cries, remindful of those of a startled courser at sound of the trumpet—all, from the very first, went straight to the Hungarian heart. This was penetrated by the passionate fluid which these interminable digressions shed around; and, no less enamoured of the episodial sadness which Bohemian music presents, Hungary would consent to see nothing but what was admirable in the wild concentration which never quite leaves its melody, however expansive the abandonment. In short, as Bohemian art owes its very existence to Hungary, it is but right that it should for ever remain under its invocation.

Then, again, without the Hungarians, what would have become of the Bohemian artist? Is it not by Hungarians alone that the Bohemians have been granted peace? They alone have permitted these nomads to live quietly after their own style and manner; allowing them to come and go without sign of hostility; to enter and leave their houses without suspicion as without fear, and without any attempt to subject them to involuntary labour. Magyars alone have drunk with them, and slept with them, in the same barns; without insulting their craving for such primitive forms of enjoyment; without con-

demning their disordered love of liberty and without heaping upon them any shame.

It was the intuition of sentiment which bound them. The Magyars respected the type; but in addition to that they loved Bohemian art so well that those who brought it to them were always petted and never by any chance became objects of jealousy. They were left free to embellish even the favourite Magyar songs, as well as to ennoble their dance-tunes; and the Magyars were delighted for the Bohemians to gladden them at their festivities, where they also touched their hearts. They did not treat them on such occasions as so many performing dogs, or send them away like so many conjurors whose tricks had been gone through for their amusement.

Bohemian art, in fact, stands to Hungary like a child to its mother; for it was the poetic sons of our country who in this way saved its existence. They gave it air, space and light; with an added ray of gold, the smile of friendship and the tear of sympathy. And beyond even these precious endowments there were the reverberating acclamations which, like a nourishing dew and fertilising breath, are necessary for the gradual unfolding of every art.

If Bohemian verve has never developed away from Hungarian territory the Magyar is well entitled to take to himself some honour on that account, for it is due entirely to his compassion. He has been prodigal in benevolence to the unfortunate Zigani, deeming it unworthy of himself to allow them to remain in such misery as elsewhere; or to permit their state to become worse than it was already. It is questionable whether more moral lustre is not really shed upon him by this humane action, and his undoubted identification with the existence and development of Bohemian art, than could arise from any satisfaction of amour-propre resulting from his claiming a share in the merit of these artists. Such a claim would bear an undesirable resemblance to that of a share in an investment; and the Hungarians would scarcely seem to be acting in the spirit of their touching hospitality if they endeavoured to draw a profit therefrom.

Generosity of heart is so rare and estimable a virtue that it does contribute to true glory to be willing to barter its beneficent ray, even for a share in the renown of genius.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Case as between Magyar and Gipsy.

1.—Gipsy migrations.

IT may be that certain scholars and experts in these subjects, Hungarian by birth, will be inclined to ask us why it should occur to us to attribute this music specially to the Bohemians—music upon the creation of which they pride themselves, as upon a national property. Why should we (inverting the terms as they consider) attribute the honour of its invention to those who are generally considered merely as its executants; or as mere reciters of a poetry of which they are not the authors?

We are well aware that the first impulse of many civilised musicians, who have concluded their studies by devoting a special course either to the study or practice of this branch of art, will be to protest against the supposition that the music produced and interpreted in Hungary by Bohemians belongs to them inherently. Any well-founded and conclusive dissertation upon this question is unfortunately out of all practical question; because it could only be based upon inductions, in consequence of the few facts and materials upon it which are available being extremely vague and unreliable.

Before approaching this subject more closely it may be of some utility to consider for what an immense period of time Hungary has included within its limits a variety of peoples coming from all parts of the ancient world. These peoples bore various names; which they received according either to

the origin to which they laid claim, to the occupation which they professed to exercise, or to the outward appearance which they presented.

These names (some of which are still borne by them) are:

Romano (or Rommy, Rommitschel, etc.).
Sind-hi (pointing to Indian origin).
Chai,
Calaro,
Kârâchee,
Fáräwni or Pharaoni gentes (signifying subjects of Pharaoh),
Chinganis,
Issingi,
Jitanos,
Cincali (meaning sons of Zend, India),
Gypsies,
Zigeuner,
Cingeser,
Cyganny, etc.*

Everybody knows how erroneous it would be to think that we see before us the direct descendants of those Gipsies who originally visited our territory. The Gipsy never takes root in any country, and Hungary is no exception to the rule. Their tribes relieve one another, either wholly or partially, at distances of time the length of which is exceedingly uncertain and probably very irregular in arrangement; lasting perhaps only a few years, but being liable to extend over several generations. Even in those places where so long a stay has occurred and from which for some generations the Gipsies have never been known to disappear, the Gipsy population is never the same, having been undoubtedly changed more than once by the emigration of the more ancient tribes and the arrival of others.

In obedience to a law which we have hitherto been quite unable to understand, the Bohemians always finish by quitting the countries which are most favourable to their mode of life.

Can it be that they in this way abjure all idea of domiciliation? Is it to renew their fixed resolution, or some ancient oath, never to take root on any foreign ground? Is it a remembrance or a hope? Do their eternal displacements signify some barren regret?—or do they relate to some far-off prophecy, promising them a return happier than their departure? Who can say? Who discover?

* See Potts's great work on "The Gipsies in Europe and Asia."

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Whatever may have been the historical motive (if one ever existed) which determined their perpetual wanderings, it is certain that Bohemian tribes only quit localities where they have been well treated in order to make room for others of their exiled race. This substitution, which they even carry out in Wallachia (where a census is taken of them and they are treated like serfs) takes place in a manner unknown to us; for before they remove they have already communicated to their successors all the knowledge which they possess of the country they are about to leave.

It follows from this that as far as the country in question is concerned, or the Gipsy's relation with its inhabitants, a change of this kind is of absolutely no effect whatever. The new-comers, when sufficiently instructed, do not differ in the least from those who have departed; and therefore the fact of the casual replacement of one horde by another one, even when proved, cannot sensibly influence the result of observations in which prolonged or uninterrupted presence is assumed.

2.—Gipsy tales of Deception.

It may, however, be well to remark, before beginning any discussion, that certain data are in our possession establishing the presence of the Zingali in Hungary as early as the thirteenth century, and consequently two hundred years before their immigration to the rest of Europe in the time of King Sigismond, so often referred to. These data, according to which we are enabled to assert that Zingali have been inhabitants of Hungary for more than six hundred years, are rendered still more probable by the fact that, when the Zingali inclined to countries further west, it was pretended by some of the most artful of them that they were really Egyptians, condemned to wander about the earth for a long period in order to expatiate the crime of their forefathers; who had refused hospitality to the infant Jesus and the Holy Family at the time of their flight into Egypt.

The resemblance of this story to the legend of the "Wandering Jew," as well as the presence of the Israelites who are

generally believed to have been proscribed in virtue of a celestial punishment, caused this absurd story to be widely believed.

The fact of having invented a fiction so completely in harmony with religious dogmas as well as with the popular ignorance and many superstitions of the Middle Ages, proves that men so distracted and subject to wander must certainly have lived for ages amidst populations who held the Christian faith and amongst whom it was firmly established.

It would certainly not be in a few years that they would have been able to appreciate the exact bearing of the historical narrations in circulation at that period, to the extent of assimilating with such finesse the one most useful to them in order to cover up the improbabilities of their story; and by making it plausible to prejudiced ears to turn the very circumstances calculated to send them ignominiously to the pillory into a shield not only affording protection but even commanding respect.

Being a strange and wandering people like the Jews, they acquired, by insinuating themselves in countries which their incurable love of wandering caused them to traverse, a welcome almost benevolent; such was the power of the contrast afforded by their pretended repentance and simulated humility when compared with the hardness of heart so inveterately displayed by the deicide crucifyers.

They allowed themselves to be baptised and gave themselves out to be Christians; just as, elsewhere, they were supposed to have been converted to Mahometanism. A pretence so well calculated as that of only refusing to be incorporated with the nations through whose countries they passed, in pursuance of a spirit of mortification, showed an acquaintance already perfect with the manners of society at a remote period.

Thanks to this subtle fraud these moving tribes often managed to escape all frontier taxes; to snap their fingers at the police, and even to secure an appeal to the sovereign himself, by seizing the privileges reserved for pilgrims and penitents moved by the fear of God.

So clever a subterfuge could not happen by chance, and still less could it have been adopted as an expedient suddenly discovered.

3.—First Period in Hungary.

But if it is permitted to assume, according to certain historical traces, that the Bohemians were already in Hungary in the thirteenth century, it still remains to be urged that nothing exists to disprove their presence in that country even before that. At the time of the first advance into Germany of this heterogeneous population, the chroniclers describe it with minute detail, and with that puerile and thoughtless credulity which, in despair of explaining anything, forbears to express any doubt.

They describe phenomenal effects with perfect indifference as to causes; and the signs which accompany the appearance of a comet are on the same footing as the events which follow it. It was the same with a plague or an earthquake, or any other unexpected calamity; the fact being that, at that time, imaginations were normally prepared for the marvellous, ready to admit miracle in respect of any extraordinary occurrence, and to so inscribe it for the benefit of future generations.

But their inclination to the wonderful was inquisitive as well as superstitious; and this renders it more or less possible to follow the first stages of the arrival of the Bohemians in the various countries of Europe.

If we represent to ourselves the entry of the Zigani into Hungary as one made into a country not yet provided with citizens sufficiently cultivated to be willing to consecrate their entire leisure to preserving an account of all the interesting and remarkable events with which they became acquainted, or caring about the authenticity of such records, we shall realise quite easily that these harmless Gipsies, taking no interest in any of the questions which agitated the nations among whom they desired to dwell, attracted no attention whatever from the Magyars. At that time the latter were busily engaged in fighting on the banks of the Danube; a fact which, in itself, is sufficient explanation of the lack of all record amongst them of the Bohemian's first appearance.

At this first appearance, no doubt, the Hungarians became quickly familiar with the sight of the new comers; making acquaintance with whom would cause little surprise. They would probably be accepted very much as the flora and fauna of a new country; and, even were we to admit the possibility

of the Hungarians possessing at such an early date a historian sufficiently minute to take notice of destitute wanderers with dancing bears and women fortune-tellers at the fairs, he would have thought it beneath his dignity to occupy himself with what could have no reference to either the glory and conquests, or to the reverses of his country.

Now, considering that at that distant period over all Europe but particularly in Hungary the number of writers was extremely spare, it becomes more than difficult to demonstrate positively that the Bohemians had not already been long with us before the time when faint historical allusions to their existence begin. That existence, however, was undoubtedly marked by constant and intimate communication with the Magyars, since the latter adopted, almost unknown to themselves, Gipsy melodies for their dances and Gipsy monodies to which they fitted words in their own language. Thus, Magyars and Bohemians living together in the same country and under the same skies (perhaps ever since the Magyars themselves were established on the banks of the Danube) their sentiments have become mutualised.

But an effect of this description is only produced as the result of many generations of intercourse; as we may readily convince ourselves by observing the slowness of such fusions in other countries, where, after centuries, blue blood and red blood still remain apart.

4.—Racial affinity between Magyar and Gipsy.

The philologues consider the established fact of the Asiatic origin of the Hungarian people as one which may now be reckoned among the gains of science. Without venturing upon a discussion for which we should be unprepared (seeing that special studies of this kind do not fall within the range of the fine arts) we feel justified in adopting this supposition, subject to any new discovery or enlightenment which may accrue. This will enable us to conclude by induction that the requisite amount of analogy and difference between Magyar and Indian acoustic perceptions must have existed, to allow or incite them to adopt the same music when chance had brought these two races of equal origin together upon the same soil.

The Case as between Magyar and Gipsy

This fact, highly remarkable in itself notwithstanding the slight importance which the high and mighty science of philology seems to attach to it, renders it permissible to imagine that the Magyars are not of the Turkoman family, as is generally thought and constantly stated. The Turkoman, Mongol and other peoples of central Asia have constantly given evidence of lack of refined sense of hearing and musical perceptions. Their hearing sense is, in fact, accessible only to the coarsest effects of noise; while the same brutal impressions of rhythm are necessary for them which are reserved for the lower animals, when it is desired to incite their nervous system.

These races are also, generally speaking, without any kind of tradition—either religious, historical, literary or artistic—and are equally without legends, fables or recitals of any description to show that their ancestors have ever felt the charm and force of musical tone. Up to this very moment all these populations appear, without exception, to be completely outside the range of all musical intuition; this being the case to such a degree that music might almost be pronounced for them a dead letter, an unknown tongue; and destined, as far as can be foreseen, to remain for them always in that condition.

The Hungarians, on the contrary, having always shown themselves to be readily impressed by music—having always proved that with them the tones of this synthetic language have a deep meaning more expressive and intensive than that of any articulate words—lead us to a natural conclusion concerning them. And that conclusion is that (having arrived in Europe in such and such an age, for the period makes no difference) they belong to some lost thread of the Hindoo races.

One thing is certain; namely, that it is to the accidental meeting of the two races, Magyars and Zigani, that we owe the creation of the branch of art called "Bohemian music." For, if these two peoples, artists and listeners, had been gifted with faculties equally productive and remarkable, the probability is that, though living side by side, they would have each originated a special branch of art, according to their diversity of sentiment. They would all the more have been compelled to adopt a different style on account of the diametrically opposed circumstances under which they lived.

On the one side there was a stable and civilised existence; agricultural and commercial; political and diplomatic; military and triumphant. On the other a nomadic life without any

object or national interest, and without civilisation or progress. It would be nothing less than absurd to suppose an identity of inspiration in two races placed in such opposite conditions, which of themselves bear witness to such a difference of character. And it would be equally absurd to attribute any art so popular amongst its own as is Gipsy music to any other cause than the want of poetising the impressions of everyday life and of giving form to numberless dreams and latent motives habitual with an entire population, every individual of which thoroughly understands it as the echo of his own soul.

If, on the other hand, there had been no analogy of sentiment and organisation between performers and listeners—if the art created by the Gipsy players had not met with sympathy from their Hungarian audiences—then, undoubtedly, the dispositions of artists vegetating in such unfortunate obscurities would have been still-born for want of repercussion. It has already been said that Bohemians alone could never have provided their own public. In order that Bohemian art should succeed in unfolding itself it was essential that those capable of creating should meet with those capable of understanding it. It was necessary that one of the two peoples should possess a faculty which the other had not—that it should be gifted with an imagination more exquisite, as well as a greater facility for elaborating the form. But it was equally necessary that the other should so appreciate the thought as to be charmed by it; and be therefore incited to encourage, protect and ensure successful development for the works containing its expression.

We find a very striking illustration of the old saying that "extremes meet" in observing that the two idioms which specifically relate to the two most opposed necessities of the human race—that is to say, the calculations of his reason and the impulse of his feeling—are spread geographically to an infinitely greater extent than are those of the various languages; which split up, mix together, dislocate and ramify into dialects.

The two idioms alluded to are the numerical and musical; the one representing exactly and exclusively the comparative and appreciable relations of matter by figures, in arithmetic; and the other interpreting the inappreciable and mysterious movements of the soul, in musical notation.

These two systems both equally enjoy the faculty of having made their employment general amongst a greater number of nations than any other idiom. The Englishman or the

Brazilian who would not be able to understand a Russian—or the Dane, or the Greek, who would not be able to understand a Spaniard, in the event of one speaking to the other in ordinary language would, nevertheless, communicate perfectly over an addition or division expressed in figures, or over a melody or a score expressed in notes.

The analogy of these two languages consists in the fact that one has all the precision of mathematical inflexibility and the other an equal precision of emotional perception. Neither of them is concerned with reasoning; for arithmetrical figures by themselves do not reveal their meaning; and, singularly enough, musical notes exhibit precisely the same feature; for, by themselves, that is to say without interpretation, their significance remains undisclosed.

But they both awaken sentiment: one by the action of which it is the result, and the other by the emotion of which it is both the expression and excitant.

These two languages, however, conclude their affinity at this point; and for the following reason.

Figures arise necessarily from the nature of things created; weight, number and measure being the same, and producing exactly the same mental impression upon every being gifted with reason.

On the other hand, a musical phrase does not do so. It only says the same thing to those whose sense of hearing is disposed in the same way. It is liable to produce an entirely different impression unless the acoustical system in the one case causes it to produce the same vibrations in the soul as in the other. The psychological impressions must correspond; the melodic accentuations which rise and fall, the rhythms which divide and regulate the time, the simultaneous sonorities which go to form the harmony—all must be received and appreciated by a similar organisation if there is to be identity in the effect produced.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of National Music, and specially of Hungarian.

1.—Gipsy and Indian music.

TWO races having musical organisations presenting no affinity one with the other would understand nothing whatever of one another's music. But it might very well be that two races, formerly inhabiting the same zone, should have musical organisations sufficiently proximate to enable their descendants, by mutually adopting a certain manner of combining sounds, to understand one another easily.

This manner of combination would proceed originally from the people having the most productive genius, and most exercised and perfected musical sense. The other case would have a character more receptive; notwithstanding any modifications which contact with western Europe for centuries might have caused its intuition to undergo.

Whatever may be said of conjectures about the state of the art in that hypothetical country from which the Gipsies originally came at that dreamed-of period when they were in their imaginary home at the foot of the Himalayas, on the banks of the wonderful rivers which descend from them, or in the bosom of that luxurious vegetation which embalms the air and influences the mind—whatever may be said of this, we are irresistibly borne to consider their art as created in another hemisphere, as the ideal of what travellers tell us of the music of the Levant, whether Indian or Arab.

So far as we know no one has yet seriously enquired into any resemblances which may exist between the music of the Bohemians and that of the inhabitants of Hindustan. No one has

ever compared their principles—those relating to grammar, inflexions, derivations, declensions, endings, metres and rhythms —as they have done with respect to corresponding features of the two languages. If men could be found willing, for the benefit of art, to apply the same tenacious will and indefatigable perseverance as the pioneers of science have displayed, they would probably discover that as much relation exists between their respective treatments of sounds tonal as of sounds articulate.

It is certain that their scale contains intervals altogether different from ours, that their unexpected modulations are not due to ignorance of any better method, and that their taste for ornamentation is not a mere chance fancy. All those features form essential ingredients of a style which exists for itself; which is *what* it is because of its ingrained nature to be *as* it is.

That which surprises and shocks us so painfully is all intentional; because these intervals and diminutions into scarcely perceptible tints lend all the richness of colouring and all the variety of expression to the episodes, and enter into their being as integrally as movements of the body enter into a dance. The propensity to divide the scale into unequal portions; as well as that in favour of the use of quarter and semi-quarter tones, are proofs of a perception extremely delicate; but such features are nuances of a more or less painful character to our less acute sense, notwithstanding their being moderated through various causes. Amongst these we may reckon the quality of the instruments used by the Bohemians, the influence of climate not only upon sonorities but also upon the human ear, as well as by the fact that they are playing to audiences more or less "occidentalised." But, in spite of all these tendencies, sufficient character remains to fix the Oriental stamp upon their entire art.

What remains of their innate propensity to the use of imperceptible distances and enharmonic transitions, however, is quite enough to make us realise during the moments of excitement produced by their unequalled virtuosity the extraordinary impressions which such music is capable of awakening.

It is such excitements as these which must have given rise to those charming Indian tales which attribute to certain melodies the magic power of evocation over spirits of air and water, over benevolent fairies or malevolent monsters; even over the

gods themselves, who obeyed the call of incantations based on certain intonations.

To other melodies were attributed the power of dispersing the clouds or calling down rain; and who does not remember the poem of the young princess and her lover?

She was the daughter of a powerful king, with whom a young poet was in love; and the poem opens by representing her as listening to the pleading of her lover. He knew one of the melodies to which was attributed the power of consuming whoever should sing it, and this melody she desired to hear at any price. He decided to satisfy her; and, in order to do so, he invited her to come for a walk by moonlight (as is the custom in that country) in a magnificent garden on the banks of the Ganges.

Then, plunging up to the waist into the sacred waters, and with harp in hand, he began to sing. By degrees his voice grew fainter and the water reached the level of his heart. Little by little it reached his shoulders, then his neck, and last of all his lips. But alas! Even the divine waters were powerless to extinguish a fire still more divine. When, at last, the voice ceased altogether and the rash young princess saw only a flame rise from the spot whence the singer had disappeared never to be found again, all that remained of him was a blue flame which, for a long time, wandered floating upon the surface of the water as if trying to approach the shore. He had terminated his earthly life with the last flickerings of the *feu-follet*, in which all his being had been transformed under the incandescent and absorbing action of his song.

The explanation is that he had dared to exhale that melody knowing it to be the apanage of the gods. He knew also that, although the melody itself may be known to mortals, it is not given to them to possess the intensity of celestial life necessary for its enjoyment.

2.—Greek scales.

In Greece, where the musical scale was also divided into in-

knowing it to be the appanage of the gods. He knew also

tervals of much less distance than ours, and whither all music seems to have been brought from Asia Minor (in the first instance probably from the Euphrates, or even perhaps from the

Indus) tradition also attributed prodigious effects to certain melodies—effects not only upon human sensibility but also upon the forces of nature. It is, for instance, scarcely necessary to recall the civilising influences attributed to Orpheus taming the wild beasts; or to Amphion, whom the stones obeyed by arranging themselves in order at the sound of his lyre.

The more the element of symbolism is to be discovered in these fables, the more we have to admit that, at the time when credit was given to them, music was held to possess the gift of acting immediately and irrevocably upon human sentiment. The Phrygian mode was supposed to incite to heroism, and to animate a man in war even to ferocity. Other modes were regarded as effeminating him by inclining him to luxury. There were also modes which were thought to have an effect upon the heart, making it, instead of cruel, humane; instead of severe, just; instead of violent, gentle; and instead of hard, compassionate. Though these were all distinct effects they were united in the kind of action which the Italians so gracefully call *ingentilire*—much more prosily expressed by our word "to civilise."

This explains why all the Grecian legislators, Plato not excepted, agreed to range under the name of "Music" the obligatory studies of youth; the aim of which was to cultivate the talents by ideas and sentiments calculated to make man better—these studies being intended to elevate his being, in elevating his aspirations towards that superior sphere where he governs himself in the name of Reason, and by virtue of his unconquerable need of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful.

Music by itself does not develop the reason; but from it proceed those emotions of the heart from which the will is developed. It would avail nothing merely to *see* the True, to *know* the Good, or to *judge* the Beautiful if, in the meantime, the will to act were lacking.

Music is the intermediary which places sentiment in harmony with intelligence; enabling us to enjoy and love that with which intelligence enables us to become acquainted. The Greeks, who were naturally gifted with an incomparable appreciation of the Beautiful, well understood the subtle connecting link provided by music between the perceptible and the impalpable—between that which is understood and that which is felt.

Nothing at all resembling the artistic celebrations or fabulous traditions of Greece or the fairy tales of Hindustan is to

be found among the annals of the peoples from whom the Magyars are said to have proceeded. Whatever opinions may be held by the learned upon the state of music in the countries bordering on the banks of the Ganges or at the Helicon, it is quite impossible to question its immense superiority over anything in the way of musical art among inhabitants of the plains of Central Asia.

But who would deny *a priori* that the more nervous temperament of one of these peoples may not have given it sufficient affinity with the Greeks or Hindoos to place it in a position to identify itself with a musical sentiment, however intense; especially after a course of training due to habit? This similitude represents probably what has happened; and easily explains why all the features proper to Gipsy music were spontaneously adopted by the descendants of a race in which no doubt the sense of hearing had as yet only taken pleasure in the physical sensations of rhythm, enforced by piercing intonations and instruments of percussion.

But, in view of their origin, they possessed the necessary intuition for prompt initiation in those higher traits so often alluded to as appertaining to Bohemian music; but for the earliest origin of which we have to go back to Hindustan.

3.—Origin of Hungarian music.

All native Hungarian music naturally divides itself in the first place into melodies for song and dance; amongst which there is so great a resemblance that it might almost be called identity of character. At first sight we are bound to admit that, so far as the vocal melodies are concerned, the Bohemians would have little to be proud of. But these are folk-songs sung to Magyar words; in circulation only among Hungarians; and are attributed, some to herdsmen, others to warriors of that race and language. The matter, however, does not end here.

In the first place, it must be observed that for want of solid basis of argument the origin of any Hungarian dance tune is very difficult to establish. What is there, for instance, to support the opinion of those who deny that the Hungarians conformed their choregraphic exercises to the music which the Bohemians had brought? Or, again, who can prove that the

latter having neither dance nor any other music of their own borrowed everything from the Hungarians—melodies and rhythm as well?

There exists unfortunately for neither of these two different opinions any substantiating array of facts; which makes it probable that pleading in favour of each will go on, and the general view be therefore liable to incline this way or that in response to the varying conjectures which arise.

One thing certain is that music and dance form an integral part of the rejoicings of the Bohemians. In whatever country they are met with, a collection of sonorous musical instruments always forms part of the baggage of the camp. Another fact is that their wild whirling dances, remindful of the religious dances of the Oriental dervishes, seem also to approach in character those of a type traditional with them. The principal movements which constitute them are to be met with again and again, irrespective of any distance between the tribes concerned; a circumstance which fixes our attention when we observe that amongst customs preserved by the most miserable offshoots of the race, decrepit and forlorn creatures dwelling round about the marshes of Wallachia, the leading features of dancers are precisely the same as those of the dances indulged in by the most elegant Gipsies of Moscow.

In conjunction with this, however, it is to be noted that if, as would appear, the Zingani had a traditional dance, there must also have been a traditional music appropriated to it.

What is there strange or impossible in assuming that the Magyars, profiting by the superior talent for music of their guests, may have unconsciously allowed their most frequent dance melodies—the melodies therefore most to be considered as national—to gradually conform themselves to the rhythm of Bohemian airs? With time this adaptation would become so complete that traces of the origin of the fusion would be completely lost, and the two be as twins inseparable.

In face of this possibility what is there to show that the Bohemians borrowed Magyar melodies? Or rather was it not, on the contrary, the Magyars who fashioned their dances upon the Gipsy tunes?

Far more probably these airs belong to those for whom they were a necessity; judging by their manners, both ancient and of the present day. Necessary indeed they were, and at every instant. They were wanted to accompany the tambourine

dances of the young girls in their skips and turns and bounds; as for the bear and monkey exhibitions. And they were most important in connection with the laughable triumphant entries into the little towns; when the orchestra marched in front, and there was a grand show of tricks of all sorts—all this happening whilst the women did their fortune-telling.

If the dances themselves which require this music are not quite the same as the national dances of Hungary, it does not appear difficult to admit that, whilst employing the Bohemian music, the Magyars would naturally import such changes as their own character might require. Their military training would lead to the introduction of gymnastic movements as well as of typical figures and steps, originating in their primitive country. This is a supposition to which their resemblance to Cossack dances lends some probability.

Dancing, being inseparable from music, lends itself naturally to singing; especially among primitive nations. Civilisation eradicates and stifles this tendency by increasing the measure of what is expected from each art; and thus compelling it to adopt an isolated position, in order to become perfect. The union however always persists, until by degrees divorce becomes quite compulsory. Thus it happens that, in several countries (not by any means the least civilised) a custom survives of accompanying certain portions of the dance by choruses, interspersed with couplets, partly recited and partly sung by the principal dancer. In Poland, a neighbouring country, the Krakowiaki and the Tropaki present examples, some of which have become quite celebrated in the history of national music.

We do not disguise from ourselves that the theory of Hungarian national songs being purely of Bohemian origin is much more hazardous than that of the Zingani being the authors of their own dance music. It is one instantly encountering difficulties scarcely to be attacked or even turned aside; being in flagrant contradiction with the ideas generally received in our country on this subject. Certainly we must admit that it does not rest upon any document, and is based upon deductions which some may regard as vague. But these deductions are nevertheless of such strength as to range us upon the side of those who hold that even the most ancient national songs of Hungary—those therefore upon which modern art has not the

faintest claim have been originally borrowed* from the Bohemians; deliberately borrowed by those who fitted them to Hungarian words. Amongst the considerations that decide us to their view there are some which seem to us quite peremptory, as we shall endeavour to show.

Before all, let it be observed that the melodies now called national were not composed by the nation, but by individuals. Their popularity is determined and maintained by the resemblance between the inspiration from which they sprang and the national feeling; and it is this union which has imprinted upon them a national character.

For a long time however these songs in spite of being so related to individuals were never claimed by any one. Not only so, but whoever felt sufficiently equipped for the purpose added another song to the group, and in this way the number was increased without any of their authors departing from the usual anonymity; each such composer having in fact produced too little to cause him any vain feeling in the matter.

It was precisely the same with the performers. At first every one sang these songs without any individual aspiring to do so better than another. But the moment inevitably arrived for one special singer to excel in their performance and gain a reputation on that account.

When the sum total of such music had attained proportions sufficient to constitute a monument worthy of remark, by its qualities of sentiment and form, and its ensemble seemed to assume the attractions of a separate art it would have been strange indeed if that condition had not been marked by the uprise of some individual of exceptional excellence fixing attention by an uncontested superiority as an author or singer.

From the sixteenth century we have the names of famous Bohemians, the memory of whom is still widely preserved; and there can be no doubt that, but for the lack of capable writers, we should possess an equal knowledge of such celebrities in the preceding ages. On the other hand, we have no mention of any Hungarians until a period quite modern; in fact not until the brilliant development of this art in the eighteenth century had spread the taste and fashion for it amongst the rich Hungarian aristocracy; who, during the reign of Maria-Theresa, so

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* Liszt adds the German term *abgelauscht.*

imbued her with the same spirit that it soon became also the fashion amongst the high and charming aristocracy of Vienna.

What can we conclude from all this except that Bohemian music is really the property of the people who cultivated and illustrated it?

Already at the most remote periods we hear of Bohemians, universally esteemed and renowned as virtuosi, whose celebrity in some cases reached a degree of success quite the equal of any such modern European reputation. But at none of those distant periods do we ever hear of any real Hungarian having acquired such renown as to be everywhere fêted and acclaimed for his extraordinary virtuosity either as singer or player.

In Spain the Jitanos are celebrated for their singing and, though we have not been fortunate enough to have trace of any remarkable instance, that does not imply that formerly they did not exist. Have not the Gipsy women in Russia acquired a reputation for the whole race; in proving its vocal faculties as soon as hygienic conditions permit of their being developed; and providing that such conditions continue sufficiently long to allow the artist time for necessary study?

It is quite true that, so far as Hungary is concerned, the Bohemians have neither been remarkable for beautiful voices nor for any particular love of song; their principal reputation in that country being as violinists. But there is no difficulty in explaining why the vocal branch of the art has remained uncultivated when the instances under observation of women with beautiful voices and who have really tried to turn them to account show that the absence of any roof-shelter from the inclemencies of the air creates a difficulty which a delicate vocal organ cannot resist; besides which all the other exciting round of exposures connected with their eccentric destiny combines to destroy the freshness of an organ which would otherwise be capable of successful development. These causes have naturally the same influence upon the men; and there is little doubt that the general impression of their inferiority in singing, especially when compared with their high reputation for instrumental performance, has gone far to discourage the Zigeuner from an attempt the result of which might have been quite different under other circumstances.

In Hungary it is the dance tunes which have formed the principal canvas for the instrumental amplification which is so peculiar to the Bohemian orchestra. But, with these melodies,

the songs preserve a well known affinity; and the fact of their having originated from the same source is not obscured by that of their being principally propagated by Hungarians; the latter having remained in constant touch with them on account of their union with Magyar text. This is further shown by these songs having always preserved their greatest purity when naturalised in a part of the country where contact with Bohemians was the most sustained; as, for instance, among inhabitants of the open country and the steppes, among the soldiers and shepherds—shepherdesses of course included.

It seems presumable that the Hungarian peasant, whose inferior musical organisation would render him less conscious of the imperfections of his singing, seized upon the melodies which he heard the Bohemians perform as a sort of windfall. Leading a primitive life undisturbed by any physical agitation, his own voice generally remained sufficiently fresh for the purpose of singing them; and it is quite simple that they should have spread, especially when assimilated with words of his own language.

The existence of songs not appropriated at the same time would thus be completely ignored; especially as their Gipsy text would confine their use to the Zingalis exclusively; so that when, as is probable, they were taken over one by one by the instrumentalists (who soon caused their purely vocal character to disappear) it was no longer possible for us to recognise them under the luxuriance of their new elaboration.

4.—Position of Hungarian Music.

The instruments generally considered as proper to the Hungarians, and upon which it is supposed that they originally repeated melodies which at first had been only sung (such as the Farayala, the Kust, the Tarogaso and the Duda) did not form part of the Bohemian orchestra. They have in fact never emerged from the *Pustas*, where they still rejoice the solitude of the peasant—labourer or shepherd. These instruments have never contributed outside their own rural sphere to spread the fame of a kind of music, which, by the way they interpret very badly. This music is so evidently Bohemian that the identity becomes quite complete the moment it is restored to its original

colour by the sonority of the Bohemian instruments; for the Gipsies soon make it resplendent with the luxury of ornamentation in which prismatic rays seem to play upon each note as upon the scales of a dolphin; reflecting red or gold, blue or green, violet or silver.

In order to invest any national and popular art with the right to claim incorporation in that grand mystic city peopled by the arts which have gradually unfolded themselves among the nations, and which enjoy the admiration of the whole world, it must have already passed the age of infancy. It could not be allowed to enter while still in the condition of having to stammer its inspirations; for, within those precincts, it would be held to be ready to measure and compare with the choicest fruits of every rival.

Hungarian songs, such as they exist rurally, and Hungarian airs, such as we hear them executed upon the instruments mentioned above, are both too poor and incomplete to produce any new artistic result; and cannot yet even pretend to the honour of being universally appreciated; still less to that of being ranked with lyrical works which have already attained to a high degree of repute.

But Bohemian instrumental music, as presented and propagated by the Zingani orchestras, is well able to face competition with any other art; whether comparison be made on the score of a bold originality full of the most noble sentiment, or on that of exquisite completion of a form as beautifully inspired as it is happily carried out.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Gipsy Creative Faculty.

1.—First effect of Gipsy music on ordinary musicians.

SHOULD one desire to analyse Gipsy music, to dissect, dismember or decompose it in order to judge of its texture and compare it with our own, it would be necessary in the first place to make clear what are the features which most distinguish it from every other kind. In this case we should have to begin by mentioning its system of modulation, which seems to be based upon a total negation of all pre-determined plan for the purpose in question.

The Gipsies do not recognise in music, any more than they do in ordinary life, the force of any principle, law, rule or discipline whatever. Everything is good, and everything permitted, provided that it pleases them—provided that their inner feeling coincides, or even goes beyond; for, in common with the innate desire of every artist, they have a continual striving to express more. Therefore, they do not hesitate before any stroke, however bold, provided it corresponds with the hardy instincts of their heart—provided they are able to realise in it the reproduction of their being.

For the Gipsy, art is not a science that one may learn; or a trade which one may practise; or a skilfulness which may be imparted by dint of certain procedures and expedients. Nor is it an industry which may be cultivated according to the lessons of experience; or a kind of witchcraft in order to exercise which one only requires a certain formula. It is a mystic song—a language which, though sublimated, is clear to

the initiated; being that which they employ according to the exigencies of what they have to say; and in which they have no intention of allowing outside considerations of any kind to influence their manner of speaking.

Their habit of passing suddenly to a remote key, combined with their use of intervals and facility in the use of semitones and quarter-tones (such instances including the quarter-tones which generally strike us as wrong notes), are likely to be considered as traces of some connection with the tonal system of the Hindus; just as we find in their language Sancrit roots, inflexions and endings. But, for all that, the Bohemians stand just as clearly established as the creators of their art; a few traditional data notwithstanding.

They themselves hold firmly that they have invented it for their own use; for them to sing to themselves and to each other, and by its means to sustain the most intimate and touching monologues. It would in these circumstances have been strange indeed if they had suffered the intrusion of any obligations or conventions in their music: they, moreover, who had never tolerated the slightest interference of the kind in anything else.

The entire possessions of the Gipsy consisted of a language and a scale—these together forming their palladium. It was in this way that they also regarded them; and the only religiously sincere respect they have ever shown has been for the preservation of these treasures, neither their speech nor their music ever having been submitted to the operation of any of our precepts; especially not to any rule affecting the relations of musical sounds.

Intermediate modulations seem to them to be so optional that we may describe their appearance as excessively rare; and regard their introduction, in the few instances in which they are to be met, rather as a modern corruption than as appertaining to the original type. Chords of transition, so essential with us, are, with very few exceptions, completely left out in the bold attack of one key after another which occurs in all genuine Bohemian music.

This habit is a sort of *salto mortale* which, when heard by our ordinary musicians for the first time, turns them completely aghast. They are not only always thunder-struck and embarrassed but very often even intimidated; as may be

observed by their generally having, for a time, nothing to say. At last, when they do speak, the temptation is ever to cry:

"This would be fine if it were only correct,"

quite oblivious of the fact that in certain cases the beautiful is only beautiful at the price of freeing itself from certain prohibitory decrees; which, not having existed always and everywhere, cannot without exaggeration, lay claim to universal obedience.

The civilised musician is at first so astounded by the strangeness of the intervals employed in Bohemian music that he can find no other way of settling the matter in his own mind than that of concluding the dissonances to be accidental; that they are mere inexactitudes; or, to be quite frank, faults of execution. He is equally put out by the modulations; which are habitually so abrupt as to defy his most treasured scientific musical tenets. If he could make up his mind to take them seriously at all they would horrify and scandalise him; and he would probably consider their position in musical art as about equivalent to rape, strangulation or parricide.

As against all this an ordinary listener, possessed of the twofold advantage of being impressionable and of *not knowing* music, is rendered attentive at once by these new elements; which both overawe and charm him at the same time. Even if only slightly amenable to the power of musical expression he will be better able to catch the sense of what the Gipsy intends than will be the normal type of professor. For the listener will not be handicapped in forming a judgment by having prejudices tending to vitiate it.

Generally speaking the *dilettanti* of Europe, whether French, English, German, Austrian or Italian (Italian particularly), begin by understanding nothing. Not only these, but the amateurs who have just a little schooling and the ordinary teaching professors, even the *maestri* of the conservatories—all are utterly lost at this manner of becoming suddenly immerged in the immaterial fluid which it is in the power of music to disengage so intensely that it freezes or burns us instantaneously.

They all agree in not being able to conceive how any reasonable man (any respectable citizen, in fact) can dream of precipitating himself without the slightest preparation from one phase of sentiment, as represented by a certain musical

tonality, into another completely opposed to it. They wonder too how he could possibly decide to pass at a stroke from one mode into another with which it has not the slightest relation, as the Gipsy does when he throws himself from one state of the soul into another quite contrary to it without waiting for the gradual diminution of the one and the similarly gradual formation of the other.

The professional European musicians, and particularly the Jew, perceives in music nothing more than an industry; based on scientific calculations. For that reason it is they who are the most struck at first sight (or, we should rather say, first hearing) by this musical anomaly. But the simple intelligent layman fully experiences the poetic effect; and he does this without taking much, if any, account of the audacious novelty by which it is produced.

The use of modulations which cause us gradually to quit one key before allowing us to proceed full sail into another is a system which facilitates the employment of enharmonic passages.

Therefore, now that we have brought forward the absence of this as a predominant trait of Bohemian music, we may resume by fixing attention upon the three principal points which constitute the Bohemian character, and from which all peculiarities of the art are derived.

These are:

Intervals—not used in European harmony.
Rhythm—proper to the race.
Ornamentation—luxuriant and eminently Oriental.

2.—Gipsy scale and orchestration.

It is very difficult to separate Bohemian motives in which the intervals unused by us produce such a powerful effect from the two elements which, so to speak, are of the same birth.

These are:

(1) Their extremely flexible rhythms.
(2) The ornamentation of the improvisor.

When these melodies are merely sung, they are in the state of being deprived of their variegated plumage, as well as of

the thousand facets presented by a profuse ornamentation. But, even in that condition of disadvantage, the astonishing variety of their rhythms entirely preserves them from the monotony of the *Dumki* (songs) of the Ukraine; which always finish by tiring those who at first were most affected by the melancholy they express. Moreover, the use of piquant intervals gives to the Gipsy melodies an effect like the casting of a fiery tint; with which the Ukraine melodies have nothing to compare.

It never happens that a Gipsy melody is delivered by one of their virtuosi in its original simplicity; in a style, as we may describe it, of sober literalism; for the reason that, besides the passages which he inserts between each of the notes and at every organ-point, the endings of the periods under his bow naturally assume a character derived from *appoggiature* mordante or grupetti, and are invariably marked ~, ~ or X. But, even after one of these melodies has been stripped of the sparkling effect due to the diamond-gear in which it has been arrayed for production, it is always easy to see that it emanates from a profound feeling; being saturated with passion and bearing the unfailing imprint of nobleness in its expression of suffering and dignity—a nobleness which it never loses, even in the wildest outburst of excitement.

Bohemian music with few exceptions adopts, for its minor scale, the augmented fourth, diminished sixth and augmented seventh.* By the augmentation of the fourth, especially, the harmony acquires a strangely dazzling character—a brilliancy resulting only in obscurity. Every musician recognises at once how decidedly and to what an extent this practically constant triple modification of the intervals caused the harmony of Gipsy music to differ from that in use by us.

It need scarcely be said that the mere enumeration of these criminal infractions of the sacred canons of harmony was quite enough to make contrapuntists inclined to decree a priori that such music is nothing but the merest cacophony; but they can only do so by ignoring the age-long popularity it has enjoyed in its own country of origin and the enthusiasm with which it has always been received at Vienna—that country of Haydn,

* This description of the intervals is as given by Liszt and should be taken in conjunction with what has been said in the previous section of this chapter regarding the Gipsy use of intervals.

Mozart, Gluck, Schubert and Beethoven. Haydn, as a genial old man, passed many hours in listening to it. Schubert knew it well, and even tried to translate some fragments of it for our use. That Beethoven gave it some attention is amply proved by pages of his work, several of his thoughts, and more than one of those voluptuous flights which occur in his later works.

The mere mention of the last great name places us upon sure ground in advancing that all rules and laws in art have been made a posteriori, and that all the principles and methods, all the reasoning and arguments, will never succeed in proving that a thing is either good or bad in itself.

Between Sentiment and Form there is some impalpable flame, some principle of mysterious equilibrium, the presence of which is the final authority in deciding the rank or value of any artistic production. It is that which determines whether the transparence of a sentiment is met with in a form to a sufficient degree for the sentiment to become translucent; or in other words for the sentiment to shine out in all brilliancy.

The existence of this identification between

Sentiment,

which is the soul of every work of art, and

Form,

which is the clothing of its body, constitutes the supreme reason of its existence; and is a complete and invincible reply to any objection.

But this impalpable flame—this mysterious identification—does not lend itself to any verbal description; its test being that of making itself immediately perceived. We shall therefore in this place abstain from any digression upon these fourths, sixths and sevenths, relying upon their own power to justify their modality and eccentricity. How, in fact, would it be possible to convey in printed words an idea of their importance to people who have never studied music; whilst others, as we well know, are not prepared to believe even their own ears; though they may not necessarily belong to that great majority of musicians who only possess ears for the express purpose of not hearing.

The habit of ornamentation visibly stamps Bohemian art as one of Asiatic origin, and elevates the first violin to the

position of principal personage in the orchestra; the latter, strictly speaking, being only there to serve him in one way or other; either to increase his sonorities, to mark his rhythms, or to shadow or colour the efflorescences of his improvisation. It is the first violin who decides the degree of movement; and, as soon as he has embarked upon any special feature, the orchestra waits in silence for the emotion to subside. The extent of its expression depends entirely upon the inspiration of the moment; which also decides the precise form to be given to the cloud of notes. These roll forth in figure after figure, remindful of the entangled tendrils, the tear drops from which in autumn are as the notes of melody falling one by one.

The orchestra is so electrified by the fire, or, it may be, the melancholy, of its chief, that, when the latter has come to the end of his explorations—when, having allowed himself sufficiently long to float in air, he gives sign of being about to fall, they never fail to share his emotion. When, therefore, the moment arrives for receiving him into their arms they do not allow him to reach the earth, but sustain him, aid him to rebound, and so identify themselves with his passion and frenzy that in Hungary there is no listener who is not equally moved, the entire audience being subject to one wave of excitement.

So far as orchestration is concerned, there is, in Bohemian music, as complete an absence of it as there is of thorough-bass. The first violin is everything in the Gipsy band; where the others only serve to darken his shadows and lighten his flight of gaiety. The violin by itself, of course, whatever might be the genius or technique of the artist, would never be able to produce the same effect as the combination; but none of the other musicians has any special part assigned to him.

It follows that there can be no comparison, however remote, between effects of this description and those resulting from the polyphony of Meyerbeer, Berlioz or Wagner. All that these musicians aspire to do is to support the motive, increase the sonority, accentuate the rhythm and seize with alacrity the thought of the virtuose soloist when he returns from his sidereal excursions.

3.—Gipsy rhythms.

That which, more than anything else, tends to increase the admiration in which Gipsy music is held is the liberty and richness of its rhythms; distinguished both by a multiplicity and a flexibility nowhere else to be met with in the same degree. Their variety is really infinite: they double and divide, then they double again and become superposed. Then, they break and join, giving out on each occasion of change a quantity of shades of expression, from the most ferocious violence to the most despondent *morbidezza* or genial *smorzando*; from the most warlike *alla marcia* to the lightest dance measure; from the triumphant pageant to the funeral procession; or from the mad round-dances of the phantom willis on the Bohemian meadows at moonlight to the bacchanalian songs which encroach upon the morrow.

The succession, combination and enlacement of these rhythms render them marvellously apt to awaken poetical images in the mind—characteristic as they are either of fire, flexibility, dash, undulation, verve or fantastic caprice. Either irritating like an amorous provocation; mournful like the telling of some painful secret; mad as the gallop of a racehorse, or finicking and frisky like the hops of a little bird in the sunshine. Sometimes distracted and breathless like a wounded stag trying to escape the pack; sometimes deeply grumbling, as a wild boar driven back into the thicket; it may be, affectionate as a lover; or proud as a conqueror advancing to give fresh battle; busily gossiping like a pack of young girls, or all spurred and panting as for a cavalry assault upon a redoubt.

Nevertheless, these rhythms assume a gait which is not only free in itself but freely treated. There are no trepidations to be met with, no hesitations similar to those of the waltz or the mazurka. On the other hand, their diversity is infinite. Their rule is to have no rule. Flexible as the branches of the weeping willow bending under the sway of the evening breeze, they pass from duple to triple movement according to the requirements of impression, tumultuous or resigned, as the case may be; according to whether they are painting the rebound of passions and their turbulent reawakening, or the yielding lassitude of the soul which allows them to slumber, covering itself with poppies and water-lilies.

These rhythms, by their variety, sometimes recall the leaps and inflexions of the asclepiads*; which, proceeding by unequal steps, often imitate the slow reptation of the serpent, or, by throwing themselves forward in a bold curve, quickly reach some far-off support. The way is bestrewn as it were with drops of blood to which certain notes in the Bohemian rhythms bear a metaphorical resemblance.

It would scarcely be possible to urge sufficiently the rare beauties which result from this richness of rhythm, and therefore the importance to be assigned to it in the proper appreciation of this music. We know of no other direction in which European music is able to turn profitably for the promotion of its rhythmic invention and for increased aptitude in its application. The abundance of rhythmic variety upon which to draw is incalculable. Each new fragment seems as if it contained another form within itself; either allowing of some ingenious and unexpected application, or suggesting some sudden development of its most picturesque effect, hitherto absolutely unknown. This feature is rendered all the more remarkable by the fact that in the folk-music of other nations it is uniformity of rhythm which constitutes the originality and defines the sentiment to be expressed.

It is, in fact, a natural happening that the sedentary peoples leading a life monotonous in comparison with that of the Gipsy are not moved to express in their art anything more than one sentiment—that sentiment being the phase of soul predominant amongst them.

On the other hand, that Bohemian art is one of constant variety will appear at once to whoever has made himself familiar with a large number of their pieces; for he will be able to judge of this inexhaustible fertility in which he will be scarcely able to discover the same combinations many times repeated. There will, however, be no difficulty in understanding this if we remember that the Bohemian reproduces the impressions of quite contrary passions within a very short space of time, as a consequence of the life he leads in constant com-

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* Rhythm of the asclepiad,

for illustration of which see first Ode of Horace.

merce with Nature; whose every changing aspect has its own tonality; its own psychological tint.

Our senses more purified and our impressions more subjected to analysis, comparison and meditation, give us but a feeble reflection of this terrible variety when they allow us to perceive continual changes of colour and a different ensemble of atmospheric vibrations in the same daily scenes and in the same landscapes.

4.—Gipsy power of ornamentation.

The multiform luxuriance of the rhythm finds its pendant in the exuberance of beautifications with which the artist-virtuose or improvising poet ornaments and brightens up his theme. He can no more dispense with any of these amplifications than the jeweller of the last century would have been able to deprive himself of the elaborate engine-turning with which he carried out so many beautiful designs, round rococo figures or mythological groups, the whole of which together formed what by comparison might be called his melodic thought. The position would have been the same as if marquetry had been called upon to abandon the system of ornamentation carried out in the thousands of patterns with which it enclosed its subjects, thereby greatly enhancing their value. Or, as if the Renaissance masters in their architecture, or Raphael in his Vatican fresco paintings, had had to renounce all the florid richness of the inventions with which these vast compositions were embellished. Or, as if the mural painters of Pompeii had been denied the liberty of presenting their work in the form most flattering and agreeable to the eye.

The masters of Bohemian art, eminently inspired, will not submit to any laws of reflection or restraint; proceeding spontaneously and until now inseparably from improvisation. They give free course to every caprice and turn of fancy; gallop across country whilst indulging in endless transformations of the same material; or they saunter along a meandering path, giving to zig-zags an unexpected movement and allowing their imagination freely to suggest the many forms of embellishment known collectively as arabesque.

The name Arabesque is taken from the country in which this

kind of ornamentation reached its most dazzling development. But there the art was one occupying *space*; whereas in the present case it is applied to *time*. Now, the Bohemians are such past-masters in the composition of musical arabesques, capable of reproducing for the ear precisely what Moorish architecture presents to the eye, that it would be difficult to admit the possibility of any rivalry with them. They ornament each note of the melodic edifice just as the architects of the Alhambra ornamented each brick; and therefore in such a way as to give their ornamentation an enigmatic meaning. The unravelling of this meaning allowed free scope for the imagination; but this was a pleasure reserved for the initiated. All that the ordinary observer perceived was the grace of the design; the thought traced and the sentiment expressed by it being beyond him.

Here, as there, a small space is sufficient for much in the way of design, the final meaning of which only emerges from the many and diverse mutual relationships between fragments. Sometimes the sonorities are graduated, sometimes they appear to be opposed; whilst sometimes they are distributed almost equally upon the several notes of a theme, like drops of dew shining from a flower-bed till the sun, peeping curiously above the horizon, throws a ray into each transparent pearl. But, whatever may be the images suggested by such an assembly of musical tone, the ensemble is so decidedly fascinating that we could stay dreaming under its influence for hours.

The true Bohemian masters are those who, having syncopated their theme so as to give it a light swinging effect, restore it to the normal measure as if preparing to lead a dance; after which it appears, as it were, casting sparks in every direction by clusters of small shakes.

The effect of this upon the theme is sometimes grave and uncouth, but sometimes sweet and charming. As a treatment it is somewhat similar to accentuated gesture; thus instantly causing the melody to suggest a sprightly hobgoblin, tickling the ear with his little pointed notes.

In the next place the true Bohemian master never accepts a song or dance motive except either as the text of his discourse, or as the epigraph of a poem. This idea is one of which he never loses sight and upon which he is prepared to expatiate simply without end. The master most to be admired is he who enriches his theme with such a profusion of traits (appoggia-

turas, tremolos, scales, arpeggios and diatonic or chromatic passages) that under this luxuriant embroidery the primitive thought appears no more prominently than the fabric of his garment appears upon his sleeve, peeping through the lace-work which artistically hides it by its closeness of design.

But, like the fabric, the melody dare not disappear; for it is the stuff or material which sustains the form.

These inventions of the moment are nearly always of a most surprising description. They unfold themselves during the most unexpected organ-points and pauses, upsetting all our cherished habits; but not for that reason producing any less powerful effect. Having absolutely no motivation, rule or preparation of any kind, they remind us occasionally of the beating of the little wings of the humming-bird; which flies this way and that—its only object being to try its young strength and revel for a while in life and movement.

Then, there are the silences. These happen quite suddenly; and, taking us unawares, are forcibly remindful of the pauses which separate the capricious bounds of fawn and deer when startled. Through the brushwood a noise, too slight for our perception, is heard by them. It gives them a sudden fright, causing their every sense to stand upon the alert; upon which they immediately spring forward with the swiftness of an arrow.

In such a florid abundance of notes the melody is often reduced to play the part of the conducting ribbon of a garland amply laden with flowers. Often it happens that we see it in imagination as a fairy-form peeping through a waterfall as diaphonous as that of the Staubbach, or like a smiling sultana behind her richly bespangled veil.

It may be that this dilatancy given to the selected theme often appears exaggerated, but it no more than resembles what painters have sometimes done for amusement in extending, curving and otherwise treating the same lines, in order to give them the outline of tufted oaks and wandering brooks.

This flowery ornamentation disports itself as promiscuously as if it were a flight of butterflies; sometimes lively and joyous, rapid and repounding like a dancer who rhythmically outlines a melody while seeming scarcely to touch the ground; yet sometimes slow and monotonous as if depressed. The bunches of notes fall in abundance as if running over the brim of a horn of plenty. At each organ-point they are like myriads of

sparkling atoms, as if an odorous rain had converted itself into a vaporous drapery by which we had become enveloped; or like the snowy foam of a wave which rises like an amorous water-nymph.

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Yes! it is all that. But it is also the rustle of dead leaves trodden under foot in the cemetery by an All-Souls'-day procession; the crackling of devouring fire as it consumes a roof of thatch; or the melancholy cadence of the billows breaking upon the shore during a tempest.

Sometimes it seems as if one saw passing before them souls in pain rejected alike by heaven and hell.

Dante has written

Misericordia e Giustizia gli sdegna,

of souls paralysed by the torpor of the sin of idleness are buffeted about disdained by all, sighing and lamenting. Sometimes it is as if there were funeral piles erected for great captains and a whole nation in mourning were assisting at the hero's last rites.

In short, everything that imagination can picture can be called up at the artist's will. It may be lugubrious or charming, grandiose or delicious; that depends upon whether the master makes his appeal to the laughing or weeping faculties of his listener, whether he wishes to darken his soul by enveloping it in sombre shrouds through which terrifying visions are to be discerned, or whether he chooses to inundate it with light and cradle it in azure bands fringed with transparent droplets; for the soul is capable of being transported into an atmosphere of sensations nearly approaching a state of ravishment—sensations which inject into the veins some unknown beneficial influence, the pulsations of which render the body lighter, communicating to all its articulations an elasticity thought to be the attribute only of demi-gods.

CHAPTER XXX.

Gipsy Mode of Self-Expression.

1.—Gipsy Dress and manner.

THE kind of dress which we have generally seen worn by bands of Gipsy players is a long cloth over-garment either brown or dark blue, set off by a quantity of variegated embroidery: greater or less luxury of design indicating degrees of wealth or elegance. Like all Oriental races, as well as all indolent and ingenious natures, the Gipsies never lose their liking for lively colours; fancifully mingled with embellishments to attract notice.

The Hindus, Moors and Bohemians differ as to the above weakness only in respect of the kind of resources which lies at their disposition to gratify it. But, whatever these may be, the Bohemians have the additional habit of wearing brilliant rings in their ears, as well as with remarkable profusion upon their fingers. They usually fasten their collar with a ribbon, red, blue or green; or possibly by a metal button—though only if it should happen to be sufficiently loud in appearance. If not, it may be helped out by a false garnet as carbuncle, or by some false turquoises, as a forget-me-not.

The women have a profusion of necklaces made either of amber, coral, glass-trinkets, or even of red berries dyed. They also ornament necklaces of the latter kind with pious medals, lucky tokens, silver and copper coins—not to mention the sachels, to which various virtues are attached.

Monsieur Maréchal, of Metz, has painted some studies of Gipsy men and women so admirably that, in our view, at least,

no artist has ever caught and depicted Bohemian feeling with such entire truth. He gives us the poetry of that feeling precisely as we find it expressed in the physiognomy, contour, lips, expression and look, even to the turn of the head, of a man who is unconscious of anything taking place; or of a woman who, even if she knew and wished to pose, would not know how to begin to make herself look anything different from what she really is.

Bohemians, both men and women, have often been painted before; but few painters have had any idea beyond that of reproducing what might happen to be picturesque in the Bohemian type. They have never penetrated to the poetry of their dull melancholy and noisy merriment. Among the pastels of M. Maréchal there are some specimens of the type where nature appears to have been literally caught in the act. Those whose image he has so successfully transferred to paper appear as if they had just arrived in Europe, so strongly do they bear the stamp of the Indian races. There are some female faces of an oval never met with amongst us, so long, fine, and suave; with a formation of the eyes forcibly reminded of the beautiful Damaianti they peep out with such voluptuous softness through the jet fringe of their curved lashes. There are also some men's profiles in which sarcasm seems to be actually sneering; some in which energy seems to be nursing its anger, and others in which aspiration seems to be giving way to despair.

A painter like M. Maréchal enamoured of the Asiatic profiles with their dusky complexions and fatidical expressions would find subjects worthy of his brush in the group presented by a Gipsy orchestra. He would be struck by the sight of these men, who, as a rule, resemble one another like sons of one mother—these men with their tawny skins and faces enframed in locks of hair which fall like snakes of a varying blueish-black tint down upon their necks, the colour of which leans to a lively orange. Their eyes shine like sparks which seem to be illuminated and extinguished by some interior contrivance. Their brow is without a fold, their mouth without any set expression; whilst their lips have a preference for remaining open, as if accustomed to sighs. Their nose, straight or curved, accords with the way in which they cast their heads backwards; as both are equally indicative of pride; though, on the other hand, their careless

manner of bearing the shoulders prevents any expression of command by this means. Their attitudes show a certain independence, but without any of the laughable pomp generally assumed by their chiefs; though also without the nobility which distinguishes the peasants of Ukraine. These latter descendants of the Cossacks, if they had not manifested such a liking for war, would have presented some analogy with the Bohemians—in respect, that is, of their love of liberty, open air, music, dance and alcohol.

It may accordingly be said that in Hungary the Bohemian orchestra presents a subject of observation not less interesting to the eye than to the ear; and especially for purposes of ethnological study. Thus it frequently happens that involuntary revelations of character are met with relating to the race in which we are here particularly interested, contributing to render their existence still an enigma for our science—an enigma often guessed at but never deciphered.

2.—The Gipsy Orchestra.

The orchestra of the Bohemians was composed in our time of several different instruments, associated quite *ad libitum*. The foundation was always the violin and *zymbala*, a sort of square tablet furnished with strings ranged similarly to those of square pianos and struck by sticks; causing them to give out a sound, hotly coloured and highly resounding, even when the result of but little force.

The *zymbala* is evidently of Oriental origin; that is if we may judge by the samples seen in Europe of stringed instruments which have come from that direction. In Hungary it is only the Bohemians who play it; and an exact description of it, perfectly corresponding to the instrument now in use, is to be found in the earliest records of their arrival in this country —mention of this kind dating back to the fifteenth century.

This instrument is still well spread amongst the peasants of little Russia, who generally suspend it by a strap round the neck, which enables them to play without resting it upon a table. This, however, they have to do when it is desired to augment the sonority of its metallic vibrations. Like the violin, the *zymbala* lends itself to the ornamentations of little notes, trills and runs at every organ-point.

The whole group of instruments forming a Bohemian orchestra generally serves only to double the harmony, mark the rhythm, and form the accompaniment. They consist, for the most part, of flutes, clarinets, a little brass, a violoncello, a double-bass, and as many second violins as can be obtained. The first violin and *zymbala* attract the principal interest; filling the great rôle of the musical drama about to be played; absolutely after the manner of the *primo uomo* and *prima donna* of the old Italian opera. They may be called the *soloists* of the band; if we may be allowed to borrow a term from the jargon of the spurious Bohemian of Paris.

The first violin (whose technique sometimes differs materially from ours) unfolds all the wonders suggested by his imagination, whilst the *zymbala* supplies the rhythm, indicates the acceleration or slackening of time, as also the degree of movement. He manipulates with singular agility and as if it were a sleight-of-hand performance the little wooden hammers with which he travels over the strings, and which in this primitive piano perform the duty we assign to ivory keys.

The *zymbala* shares with the first violin the right to develop certain passages and to prolong certain variations indefinitely according to the good pleasure of the moment. He is necessarily one of those who conduct the musical poem; having either created it at leisure, or being about to improvise it at the moment; and he imposes upon others the duty of surrounding him, sustaining him, even guessing him in order to sing the same funeral hymn or give himself up to the same mad freak of joy.

From time to time a violoncello or a clarinet becomes distinguished and claims a share in the prerogative of unlimited improvisation. Some few of these have acquired a certain renown; but in spite of that they remain exceptions.

3.—Form of Gipsy music.

The Bohemian musician sought an artistic form to express his most desolate sadness as well as his most unrestrainable gaiety; two emotions which have taken up their abode in the two sections of a dance beginning gravely and then passing on to a rapid movement. Has the dance constituted itself on forms already taken up by the music?

Or, has the music (finding the form of the dance already set) adapted itself to that? These are questions difficult to answer.

At all events the Bohemian musicians have thrown the three principal elements of their music—motive, rhythm and ornamentation—into a mould which is now, by common consent, called a "Hongraise." This is divided into two parts: the first corresponding to the slow dance and the second to the animated dance which follows.*

Of these two movements the first has now for some time, however, not been danced; and, although its value from the musician's point of view has been constantly increasing, the dancers have regarded it merely as a sort of intensive introduction. This exordium rarely fails to acquire an importance, if not predominant, at all events more than equal to that of the other movement. This peculiarity is due to the melancholy strain in the poetic genius of the Bohemian, which prevents him from giving way to any burst of humorous fancy until he has first freely and without interruption wept all the tears accumulated, breathed all the sighs withheld, and dreamed his dreams in full.

This movement, which is generally suggestive of a mourning procession, is taken at a slow andante; and is variously called

Lassà,
Lassu,
Lassan,

from a word signifying the particular kind of slowness more closely indicated by *maestro*, *pomposo*, or *dolente*.

Under the term *Frischka* (corrupted from Friznù or Frisza, meaning *allegro*) the second section of the Hongraise presents us with a rapid movement, the accelerations of which, both sudden and gradual, lead up to rhythms too furious and excited ever to be applied to any of the dances used in civilised society. About a *Frischka* there is something brusque, abrupt, irregular and intermittent; it is interrupted by sudden starts, stops suddenly and then rushes off again with redoubled fury. It is never met with in triple time and its constant retention

* It has not been ascertained at what period the name "Hongraise" was first given to these two pieces of Bohemian music, but the title is admissible; as it does not exclude either andante or allegro (scherzo).

of the duple $\frac{2}{4}$ or C ensures a firmness of accentuation with which it sometimes rises to the terrible.

The innumerable slow movements called *Lassan* which are to be heard in Hungary from one end of the country to the other are also invariably in duple time; either of four, or, as is more frequent, of two beats. The triple measure is completely foreign to the Bohemian genius; just as is also the sentiment which has inspired such forms as those of the polonaise, valse and mazurka; all of them dances in triple time.

The *Lassan* is generally in the minor, followed by the *Frischka* in the major. It frequently happens that the act of transition is brought about by combining the two rhythms for a short time, which always produces an exciting but solemn effect.

The pieces called "Hongraises" which have appeared in the condition of consisting of only one movement (that movement being, of course, either the *Lassan* or *Frischka*) may nearly always be assumed to be the movement which has survived, notwithstanding the inferiority of the other. It was customary, when a beautiful *adagio* was followed by a second-rate *allegro*, to leave the latter out; and, when the *allegro* was superior, to omit the *andante* in the same way. This became all the more easy as the custom grew of playing several of the *Lassan* movements one after the other in order to prolong the time of remaining under the influence of a sombre sentiment; after which, of course, several of the *Frischka* kind were similarly united; the prolongation in this case leading to joy, laughter and animation carried to the very highest degree.

In the time of Bihary this habit of repetition was quite established; for this great artist, the pride of Bohemian art, was accustomed to keep the ball waiting whilst he gave a sort of sombre and majestic concert, exclusively composed of the most beautiful of these slow movements. These he played with an emotion and grave solemnity that would have seemed to the eyes of a European, entirely out of keeping with the time and place; but, whilst it was proceeding, there was not so much as the frou-frou of a silk dress to be heard; and no sword would move as long as it pleased this renowned artist to forbid it.

In short, he held his audience so completely under the ban of a silent emotion that, while the prosopopœia lasted, not a soul would move and a pin might have been heard to drop.

4.—Its principal features.

To speak of a "Hongraise" is equivalent to alluding to an ode forming one "canto" of the great Bohemian epopœia. The stanzas are of disjointed character and the colouring has retained a sort of primitive harshness. Contrary impressions succeed one another with an abruptness similar to that of chasm to mountain-top. It could not be otherwise. The poetic fragments of a people entirely given over to sentiments so bitter and interchangeable cannot rise to the surface of the waves of life without lighting them up by flashes constantly set going by the passion of sensation, the frequent vertigo of mad excitements, and the fantastic series of images due to a chronic somnambulism. They could not possibly produce works of art similar to those which have blossomed under the influence of calmer inspirations.

All their works, therefore, resemble one another by the vigour of their impulse; but they all differ in point of subject, because they all depict their own momentary state of soul, which cannot be either the same as that which precedes, or as that which follows. Some are filled with the graceful joyousness of a roundelay out of which one expects to see some Galatea escape; whilst some are martial, being resplendent with fanfares and full of bravery—sometimes a little swaggering. In some, a dull depression extends—like a dark night deafening and stifling all within reach, and hiding its work of destruction under an impenetrable veil; in others, there is an expression of joy so overflowing that it escapes at every crevice—like an effervescent wine from the goblet; echoes of an extravagant jubilation and laughter to excess—such as we might imagine by the inhabitants of the doomed world when contemplating the pristine marvels of antediluvian nature in their first splendours.

In one there is a lassitude mingled with despair and disdain; in another a desolation so full of grief—of inward melancholy and yet of haughtiness—that our thoughts naturally turn to those ancient medals in which Judea, the queen of nations conquered and of cities overthrown, is represented sitting august and disconsolate among the ruins and wearing her crown of dismantled towers.

Sometimes we can imagine we hear the singing of a "Dies

Iræ," sometimes a furious orgy of wild beasts. At one time there seems to be a gathering of terrors, like a rising tide which must finish by submerging the soul; at another one is dazzled as at the sudden unveiling of some great glory.

In these melodies the delirium of an extreme joy and the feeble languor of a motionless apathy follow one another quickly, just as they continually come together in the existence of their authors. The result is that they always impart to one another the effect of contrast in all the different phases to which oscillations between orgy and disgust are bound to give rise; the presumption which overtakes those who are surfeited with the good things of life and the horrible emptiness left by their impotence to satisfy the soul.

These perpetual oppositions result in a torment fit to be compared to the maelstrom of the Northern seas, where two currents, rushing against each other, seize an unfortunate ship, toss it from the hollow of the waves to their crest on high, lash its keel with their engulfing surge, and reduce it to a helpless mass before finally swallowing it up.

But, amidst the most demonstrative outbursts of mad joy, the listener may expect at any moment to be struck by some sigh, hardly restrained, causing him to realise that in all this an infinite grief is only masked by spasmodic pleasure; that underneath it all there is a moving ground, out of which there may issue from one moment to another some expressions of inconsolable sadness, like subterraneous flames escaping through imperceptible cracks in the surface of the earth.

In Bohemian art the multiplicity of ornamental figures which are interwoven with every motive, whatever may be its character, form a kind of thick foliage set off by much variety of colour; and, always rustling underneath which, the great emotions lie, like powerful but frightened birds, hiding amid the thorny brushwood.

Out of all those who have listened, ravished and astonished, to the poignant eloquence and elegant rhetoric of this art, how many are there who have thought it worth while to trace the origin from which these melodies and effects arise?

How many are there who have meditated upon the number of bitter afflictions which must have torn millions of hearts before the host of these agonised impressions could have reached the appalling dimensions necessary to form what we call an art?

How many are there who, under the charm of these enchanted dreams, understand that the reason of Gipsy pride is that the race will not consent to be other than a people apart?

How many are there who are even incapable of appreciating the elevation of desires, when they see those who indulge them wallowing in the mud, instead of being wrapped up to present a more inviting exterior?

Who is there able to measure the entire grandeur of sufferings which disdains recourse to ordinary lamentations, are superior to all outward complaint, and allow no trace to appear to other eyes—except under disguises hiding the scars which permanently remain?

But this art, as we meet it in demonstration at festivals, weddings and other joyful occasions, does reveal suffering—intensive and disfigured, but infinite and inexpressible; moments of faintness, followed by those of monstrous energy; of lassitude more melancholy than the joy of the noisiest transport. If we listen for some time to these frantic elegies whilst endeavouring to identify ourselves with the sentiment by which they were dictated, we shall see defiling before us a lugubrious masquerade over which Melancholy, like an invisible queen, presides, and from which all turbulent laughter, spasmodic joy, and breathless dances disappear.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Artistic Life of the Gipsy Virtuoso.

1.—The qualifications of the Gipsy artist.

BOHEMIAN art more than any other belongs to the domain of improvisation, without which it does not exist.

Now, it is never either the love of gain or that of mere professional triumph upon which the genius of the improvisor could be ever developed. Avidity and vanity are doubtless powerful agents for sharpening application and the will to incur labour. They bring to the surface all the qualities necessary for successful imitation—for combining and reproducing; all these faculties being within the power of the technician and distinguishing him from the man of genius. He may be a star even, of second or third magnitude; but his talent results from reflection and remains mediocre.

He who is called upon to unfold his sentiment to the public, his listeners, without the slightest preparation or meditation, by a first impulse and in the first form which suggests itself must necessarily draw his inspiration from sources much more spontaneous and personal—that is, if that sentiment is successfully to communicate itself and thus attract a crowd spontaneously attentive.

If the improvisor does not sing sincerely and for the very sake of singing; and unless he really has something to sing about, he may still perhaps in the large towns court attention to some extent by his fakements. But the people, whose judgment in the long run is both healthy and pure, will always prefer that an improvisor who deals in charlatanism should reserve his lucubrations for others.

Bohemian art, notwithstanding its autonomy, required (the same as any other) a sympathetic atmosphere and an intelligent public so as to afford its numerous musicians the opportunity of devoting themselves exclusively to it. But, in the case of the Bohemian artist individually, his song reveals that there exists in him a holy flame, the brilliancy of which his necessarily uncommunicative intelligence would never have caused to transpire except through the medium of the tonal language. He is dominated by the simple charm of pouring forth in the form of elegant stanzas the elevated sentiments which he hides even from himself, and are easily concealed beneath his other instincts, half proud and half brutal. When once he takes his instrument in hand he becomes indifferent to everything which from that moment might obstruct or prevent his entire absorption in the art which he creates—that is to say, his absorption in the poetry which he calls into being, unconscious of all else that may be going on around him.

When once he rests his violin upon his chest as if he would outpour into it his heart's feeling and make it the echo of its beatings, he concerns himself so little with the outer world that he finishes by being quite unaware of any audience. We sometimes, for instance, meet players who go on for a long time in a sort of concentrated fury whilst their features remain impassible. But by and by swollen tears will escape from their eyes, descend their cheeks slowly at first, but finally inundate the strings of their instrument. Yet, even this will happen without any nerve betraying in any other way the profound emotion going on within them. Even after fatigue has put an end to the confidences exchanged with his instrument and after he has placed his bow aside—that sceptre for evoking lugubrious phantoms or pleasures at will—it is with difficulty that he is recalled to reality.

* * * * * * *

But sometimes a childlike vanity seems expressed on the features of the exhausted artist when, passing his bowl round for contributions, he sees pieces of gold and bank-notes fall into it. These the Hungarian aristocracy formerly gave abundantly, and the Bohemian then received them in a silver-plated vessel, but no generosity ever led to a fortune being founded, nor did any question of property ever arise among these poets —homeless like the ancient minstrels.

FRANZ SCHUBERT.

Artistic Life of the Gipsy Virtuoso

2.—How the Gipsy regards his audience.

Nothing could better prove that the Bohemian's all-important yearning is to express himself to his own satisfaction than his complete indifference as to good or bad judgment, and as to the detail of what may be said about either his virtuosity or his art. All he can understand is the enthusiasm which identifies itself with the emotion he expresses and the praise which dwells upon the agitation, pathos or exaltation which he has revealed. All the rest is Greek for him.

Anything like praising or blaming the Gipsy artist in cold language, explaining to him the qualities or defects in his execution, telling him of the difference between his musical conceptions and ours, or any such traits would only bore him profoundly, and prove to be a kind of entertainment not to be long tolerated. He attaches no importance to anything but the collection after his concert; but that is by no means only because it generally represents his evening meal and his dinner the next day, but also because it is the material representation of the moral sympathies which his efforts have called forth.

The heavier his collecting bowl or the more it is covered with gifts, the more he knows he has been understood in communicating to others something of the fire which burns within himself. Those ducats, which he only counts in order to spend immediately, or feels the weight of in order to play with them, are palpable proof of real emotion called into existence by his playing. That sympathetic emotion lights up and sustains in him an invisible conflagration. It electrifies him anew, like a furnace out of which a sudden gust of wind causes a towering flame to arise.

When, in any particular locality or surrounding, he does not perceive the reciprocity of sentiment which he is accustomed to provoke, his vanity is not very quick to feel hurt. As the essential thing for him, after all, is to satisfy himself, he continues just in the same earnest way to extemporise with brilliancy on his own account.

There is no fear that evil ears may abuse his revelations, for he cannot know how far the secrets of his most intimate pulsations are understood. Nor is there any apprehension about his accents; for how could he realise that hearts beat so much in unison with his in a world which is so different from his

own? His object in manipulating the bow is before everything to satisfy his own desire. It aids him to dream of the rehabilitation of a tribe of pariahs, whose complete degradation be secretly denies.

What do listeners matter to him?

He knows that he can touch them by his playing, and also startle them.

But he equally well knows that they will never be persuaded.

3.—The Gipsy's manner of Composition.

During the ages which transpired whilst their epopœia was gradually forming by the agglomeration of a multitude of fragments, the Bohemians had the happy good-fortune to be completely ignorant of the fact that any music but their own was in existence. There was, therefore, no temptation to mix or unite, to approach or avoid sounds on any other principles than their own.

This must be held to have been a lucky chance; for they would certainly have experienced an immense difficulty in preserving their verve intact and their passion without alloy if they had all the time been face to face with another form of the beautiful. Their imagination would have been disturbed by a rivalry which, in the long run, would have put them out of love with their ingenuous efforts; a discouragement which would have alienated those sympathies which are the very fount of inspiration. The sad spectacle of their actual decline which immediately set in when they conceived the idea of competing with other artists suffices to show that, during their prolonged stay in Hungary, they must have been the sole occupants of the musical situation.

It follows that they had no acquaintance with the theoretical department of their art; nor did they experience the want of any notation; having no taste for anything but either playing from memory or permitting the imagination to trot with a loose rein over the endless savannahs of improvisation. That, however, does not prevent them from adhering to the first thought adopted by them as basis.

They bestride their theme as they would a courser, to ride over hill and valley; they recline with it as in a gilded barque

which is to carry them over waves of harmony; or they fly away upon it, as if it were a balloon to carry them to regions of imagination.

It is therefore to be noted that their tendency to yield to the inspiration of the moment does not cause them to forget the formula or the melody with which they started. Far from that; for those ideas are absolutely essential to them. They contain the typical expression of the sentiment which carries them forward, and are conceived in such a way as to allow room for individual liberty of interpretation and fanciful expansion. Thus they can always be relied upon to observe scrupulously the authentic version as well as the mode of delivery, and to preserve with care the purity of the text in the midst of the most superabundant ornamentation—or even the longest digressions.

Several of the Gipsy artists whom we have known would certainly have shuddered at the idea of modifying, altering or corrupting any of the sacramental motives. Having been instructed by masters equally scrupulous, they expressed themselves with authority in any discussions upon this subject and always raised energetic opposition to any proposed change. This would alone show, if any proof were needed, that they have always been mindful of the sense of their music and made it a point of honour to retain its integrity.

But for the immense part reserved in Bohemian art for the improvisation of the solo-artist one might compare their piety in regard to original motives of antique and primitive character to that of the story-tellers of old Russia. These were sometimes a sort of bard; at other times more like clowns—unable to read or write, but having a superstitious respect for every word, syllable or accent—also for each pause, comma and inflexion of voice; the tradition of all of which, having once been received by them, was henceforth zealously guarded. The recitations of these story-tellers, whether in pathetic or comic vein, are said to have been very efficiently given.

4.—The preservation of Gipsy music.

The musical traditions of the Bohemians were handed down with minute fidelity by a process similar to that by which their idiom has been preserved through so many centuries and migrations, without the help of writing or of any grammar fixed and taught; without any rules and without any of the people having studied its construction or even examined it.

This singular race maintains the existence of its language and of its art, prolonging the life of both, solely by empiricism. One musician teaches another as mothers do their children, to express themselves in their own language; after which they leave them to speak, out of the abundance of their own heart.

Latterly, however, the cleverest of their virtuosi have become sufficiently familiar with European ideas to perceive the advantages of writing and attach to it its proper importance. They formed the desire of collecting the most beautiful of the melodies which had been traditionally preserved, and even tried to compose, that is to say, to note their improvisations—that being the only way of handling musical material of which they had any idea. In the greater number of cases they were unable to do this; being, in fact, very unskilful and therefore obliged to dictate their thoughts.

Under these circumstances there is no doubt that melodies were mutilated by being taken down incorrectly; and were not properly revised, as the Bohemians could read but very imperfectly. But, however their music might be written, they continued to play it quite in their own way.

The imperfections of published Bohemian music resulting from this circumstance are excessively numerous, and the very excellence of the musical editors by whom it has been issued has contributed to make the matter very much worse. These gentlemen, as we have often convinced ourselves, felt impelled by their scientific training to consider as faults the peculiar intervals, modulations and discords which, though they might happen to disagree with our harmonic system, nevertheless formed precisely the distinctive character of that of the Bohemians.

They thought they were purifying, but instead of that they were emasculating the melodies and endless variations which

accompany them. It is all very well to put forward as an excuse the excellent intention with which this short-coming has been allowed to take place; but the fact remains that such glaring ignorance of the whole secret of Bohemian art deprived it of its most savage inspirations.

When we examine the dead-letter of these improvisations (which in our country are to be met with at every step, or perhaps we should say at every music-shop) we find many a *Lassan* or *Frischka*, originally taken from a Bohemian Hongraise, which has not only lost its name, but could never convey to any reader the least idea of the *brio* of execution of the Bohemian virtuosi, the incessant mutations of their rhythms, the burning eloquence of their phrasing, or the expressive accent of their declamation.

These things can only be judged of, after having heard orchestras composed of the real sons of Asia, whether of those already celebrated or (as might be even preferable perhaps) of those still half-naked and hungry.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Evolution of the Gipsy Epic.

1.—The Banker's picture.

ONE day we happened to be with a lover of paintings who had just received a canvas which had been bought for him at an exhibition, where it had achieved a great success. As was natural to a rich banker such as he, he was much occupied in trumpeting the high price he had paid for it, whilst we were contemplating its beauties in a charmed silence.

There were some children fishing, playing on a sea-beach, and forming a group which took nearly a third of the height of the picture, which was of greater width than height. The remainder was occupied by a sky of transparent and suave azure, relieved here and there by touches of small white cloud. They were as luminous as the shell of the whitest pearls of Golconda, in which each prismatic ray is reflected with equal brightness, as if dipped to an equal depth in sparkling milk.

Never had a Dutch landscape painter so well reproduced a glimpse of his own country; with its habitual melancholy, its veil of mist and darksome tints. The indescribable mournfulness of grey and brown shades had been employed by him to sing the pacific glory of a fine day in the North; which, though it might lack torrid ardour and all exaggerated energy, was set off by reflections of light giving a calm and chaste radiance to its sweet caresses. It was wonderfully true to nature: one could almost feel the fresh, vivifying temperature,

the limpid air, and the almost silvery light of the sun, which is a feature of the summer in those latitudes. But perhaps the most striking feature of all was the blue of the sky—neither too pale nor too dark, but of that attractive tint, free from all suspicion of vapour and particularly grateful to the eye, which generally takes the name of celestial. The colour, in fact, which, during the months of May and June in particular, is to be seen covering the sky as a damask threaded with asbestos; with a scattering of bright diamond-dust over it, or with a fine powder of glistening gold straining through its tissue.

By dint of looking at this picture it was easy to imagine the dazzling presence of a sun with rays disposed in fan-shape, and yielding more light than warmth. It was a brilliancy which never offended the eye, being without any unreasonable mixture of tints borrowed from other climates, other seasons or other hours of the day; without any splashes of orange or touches of ochre such as often linger on the palettes which have once revelled in the rich colours by which the Italian landscape is set off or those of the Orient are illuminated. There, one simply saw one of the ordinary fine days proper to the northern latitudes, clear and frank like the eye of a woman, sincere and impassioned. The humidity of the atmosphere was not so absorbed by the heat, but it remained still somewhat penetrated by the delicate fragrance of aquatic mosses scarcely perceptible to the idle sense; the morning dew might be imagined retained amongst close foliage until the approach of noon; whilst a light breeze was gradually rendering the air diaphanous.

On the whole, the artist had discovered a new manner of representing the landscapes of those temperate climates. In presenting their depressed physiognomy from a festal point of view he had caused them to strike an essentially different note from that by which the great masters had been inspired: Berghem, Hobbéma, Ruys-Dael, Pott, van Cuyp and others. Their accent of a sad and dreamy longing was one which never seemed entirely to leave them, even when depicting the joys of spring. This feeling had been replaced by the modern poet who preferred to express an innocent immaculate happiness, tender and beaming; but still it was one confined to a deadening tonality of sentiment capable only of gentle emotion, and unconscious of any ardent desire or feverish passion.

We were still thinking how fortunate our banker was to possess this charming work, when he suddenly interrupted our silent thoughts by saying—

"Now just observe how unwise it is not to make one's own purchases instead of depending upon newspaper praises. The picture you see there has cost me enormously dear; and I should just like to ask you whether I have good value for my money? That little group in the foreground is of no particular importance; and, as for the rest, it is nothing but blue! So to settle the matter fairly I wrote to the painter, offering to cut away the other two-thirds of the canvas and to send them back to him, if he would return half of the money; thus leaving me to keep the third which contains the subject for the other half. —Wasn't it fair?*

We refrained from telling him that the artist had probably employed ten times less time to sketch a few children playing on the shore than to paint that piece of "blue"; to give it the peculiar translucidity of those mornings when not even the most subtle vapour ventures to descend from its altitude, even so far as the summit of the tallest tree; when human vision is thereby enabled to plunge into avenues of space; to measure, as it were, by ethereal shadow the distances of the tiny clouds which swim at different heights like little silvery fishes in a lake; or, it may be, like variegated shells filled with a population of young tritons rowing, piloting one another and gambolling without end.

"Do you think the painter will consent to your proposition?" said one.

"Oh! well, if he doesn't accept, I shall cut his picture all the same; because it takes up a lot of room to no purpose," replied our amateur.

"In that case I hope you will let me have the blue piece which you do not want," was the answer.

But, as this request has never been complied with, it may be presumed that the owner of the picture resigned himself by degrees to the advisability of letting it go on occupying room to no purpose on the wall of red damask; which we confess was very well furnished.

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* As Liszt suddenly introduces the English words, "Wasn't it fair?" into his French text, we must suppose that he intends us to imagine the banker an Englishman.

For, do not let it be thought that our amphytrion was an ignoramus, making stupid mistakes about value. Not at all. He knew more about painting than many others, and he possessed a collection really well selected.

But still! A painting where you see scarcely anything but blue! What is it?

2.—Vandalism as applied to Gipsy music.

Art does not lack a Mæcenas; on the contrary, it has its "enlightened patrons," quite prepared, like our banker friend, to perpetrate barbarisms upon any work whatever.

In the case of Gipsy music, for example, you have only to take away the augmented fourth or the diminished seventh, and that would be the same thing as removing the piece of blue canvas from the marine landscape. With what our patron would call this "slight" change, you make out of a poetic work one which is merely picturesque—out of a lyric production, one which is merely characteristic—in short, out of that which is beautiful, that which is only pretty.

Let us suppose that Bohemian art had been the work of a single composer, instead of having been that of a whole people. In that case, its author would certainly have preferred to see it destroyed rather than preserved in such a manner; just as the Dutch painter would doubtless have preferred to see his canvas burned rather than deprived of its blue sky.

Let it not be forgotten that all art in general as well as each work of art taken separately is but the glorified abode of a sentiment; sometimes embodied in a thought, or sometimes acting without it by the force of its own immediate irradiation. In the latter case it gains its effect more rapidly; by showing itself more intense and always more immanent in those particular features which resemble nothing else; and in those forms the general disposition of which is stronger, and the effect more typical, because comparable to nothing else.

If we desire to preserve this music called Hungarian in all its integrity, so as to be able to transmit it in a genuine condition to our descendants, we must not interfere with its atmosphere—its "bit of blue sky." We must not attempt to deprive it of its three principal elements,—

(a) Its intervals (with all their incoherences).
(b) Its rhythms (with their many vacillations).
(c) Its florid character (to whatever extent it may develop).

It is these three elements combined which carry the melody upon their back.

Seated there, like a siren drawn along by three dolphins, coursers of the sea, the melody acquires an aspect altogether different from when it is perched upon a plinth which has not been made for it, and on which it cannot even hold itself comfortably upright.

To preserve for it out of these three elements only this one or that one, would be about equivalent to the mistake of putting the façade of a Renaissance palace before a Byzantine monument; or of placing a Greek colonnade in front of the temple of an Indian god.

It is no more possible to take away the augmented fourth and the diminished seventh of the minor scale in Bohemian music without obliterating its supreme character, without mutilating it in the same sense as the amputation of a limb mutilates the body, than to imagine a Gothic edifice after removing its pointed arches, or a Moorish building without the arch in crescent form. There would be scarcely any more common sense in making the Egyptian talus vertical, in flattening the torus of a Roman doorway, or in correcting the upturned points of a Chinese roof.

If such things were not decried as vandalism, what would become of style in art?

One cannot find a better way of exposing the absurdities of certain up-start music-men than in comparing them to analogous proceedings in architecture. Incongruities which strike the eye appeal much more quickly to the masses than do those committed in our art; which in addressing a much more subtle sense are not apparent without special culture and intelligence.

Architecture and music, moreover, are alike devoid of any prototype, and are neither of them arts of imitation. In order to be soundly judged, their works require also to be arranged in distinct families; according to the nations and to the periods to which they belong. In music as in architecture it is commonly agreed to call these great divisions by the name of *school* or *style*. In each style there are monumental works which represent its inspiration most purely—which interpret its pre-

vailing idea most exactly. Styles which are separated from one another by a certain distance are connected by works of transition, which are of equal service to both as links; evincing in the first place the influence of the school from which they proceed and also becoming modified by the influence of the school which is about to follow; whether the latter be better or worse, or whether it be indicative of progress or decay.

But in music, as in architecture, there may also be styles; born, so to speak, away from the great royal road which art pursues. Having developed away from all observation, they seem to be of spontaneous growth, because one cannot ascertain by what means they have come into being.

Such is Bohemian art as it appears to us. Taking its rise in a dim past, which we are quite unable to account for otherwise than in hypothesis, it is unprepared with any certificate of birth. It has lived with its own strength and has not been fed by any foreign essence. It has never been modified by any distant relation, and makes no boast of any consanguinity or affinity, nor of any association whatever with others more illustrious or more learned than itself.

May it therefore remain isolated in the future as in the past!

To attach itself to *anything* would mean the loss of *everything*. It must keep its special traits in order to live. In mixing with contemporary productions of European music it would simply annul itself. In a short time there would be nothing essential by which to distinguish its works; for that would be a very secondary kind of interest which consisted in recognising degenerate ancient themes from subsequent interpolations.

After they had taken away its intervals from Bohemian music (which it would be quite right to say were offensive to the ear from the moment of their being mixed up with our style, but which are of such admirable effect within the range of its own sentiment), there would only remain a trunk comparable to a statue which has lost its head; to a stalk without a flower, or a woman with no facial expression.

Bohemian art cannot maintain a place or a name in the coming time except on the condition of remaining as intact as a Roman cippus—as a triumphal column—or as a funeral urn which had been curiously worked.

3.—Necessary isolation of Gipsy music.

But, after all, it would be by no means an easy matter to deprive Bohemian art of its unusual intervals, its sudden modulations, its continually changing rhythms, and the florid ornamentation by which those rhythms are overcharged, in the attempt to transport it to the common domain of our everyday music.

The greatest difficulty would arise from the importance which it attaches to virtuosity, and the almost total impossibility of finding virtuosi among those we have, sufficiently animated by the Bohemian sentiment. The sonority of our orchestras is also unfavourable to such an introduction; it would have to be most appreciably differentiated from that resulting from our habits of orchestration, in order to reproduce the peculiar character of a Gipsy orchestra. We possess too many intermediary elements, too many modes peculiar to transitions, too many neutral and indecisive tints, to allow of their frequent and routine employment without leading to the effacement of certain crudities inherent to the poetry of the Zygan.

The regal instrument in Bohemian music is the violin; the second in importance the cymbalo. By itself the violin remains poor; and even if we multiplied it twenty times, it would remain insufficient to govern a force of harmony greatly beyond that yielded by the little army of which it is naturally the head —the dictator.

The cymbalo is known by its special traits of indiscipline to be totally unfit for the aristocratic society of our orchestras. The piano, on the other hand, which might be used for it (though unable to replace its incisive sonority) possesses certain features which might permit it to simulate the orchestra of the nomads; at all events less unfavourably than any other. It lends itself to the most luxuriant orchestration and is capable of delivering its rhythm simultaneously. It is also able to support the latter with a fair richness of harmony and a sufficiently massive sonority to give shadow where required and ensure the desired contrast between situations of opposite character. It can also in the meantime sing its melody with liberty; the more so as the intervals and other features of Bohemian music lend themselves perfectly to its effects and give not the slightest trouble.

Evolution of the Gipsy Epic

4.—The story of the "Rhapsodies."

(1.)

Profoundly moved as since childhood we have always been by Bohemian music—being even then already familiar with its incomparable attractions and initiated in the secret of its life-giving sentiment; besides gradually penetrating the sense of its form and the need for protecting its eccentricities in order to preserve its character and personality, it was natural that we should have been very early induced to transfer some of its pieces to the piano. This instrument, in fact, seemed better calculated than our orchestra to render the stranger features of this music; more capable of giving the reproduction as a whole of the abnormal passions which the Gipsy has therein infused.

After having submitted a fair number of these pieces to the process of transcription, it began to dawn upon us that we should never finish. Far from finding our interest decrease or become exhausted, we felt the work attracting us more and more. The pleasure of transferring to our instrument the eloquent apostrophes, the lugubrious displays of feeling, the reveries, effusions and exaltations of this wild muse seemed to become more and more seductive. The more we advanced the more we had still to do, and finally we could perceive no limit to it all. A mountain of material was before us; we had to compare, select, eliminate and elucidate. By dint of these occupations we acquired the conviction that in reality these detached pieces were parts of one great whole. Parts disseminated, scattered and broken up; but lending themselves perfectly to the construction of one harmonious ensemble; which might be made to include the quintessence of their most remarkable qualities, and form a compendium of their most striking beauties.

Such a compendium, according to the argument made use of at the beginning of this work, might fairly be regarded as a national Epic—Bohemian Epic—and the strange tongue in which its strains would be delivered would be no stranger than everything else done by the people from whom it emanated.

From this new point of view we had no trouble in perceiving

that the poetry which abounds in Bohemian music may easily be marked off into separate items, corresponding to the

Ode,
Dithyramb,
Elegy,
Ballad,
Idyll,
Distich;

as also song-melodies,

Martial,
Funereal,
Bacchanalian,

in character. The task was therefore to collect these into one homogeneous body. Though forming a complete work, it might be divided in such a way as to allow each "canto" to be self-sufficient, as well as forming part of the grand total. It might be made susceptible of being separated from the rest; enjoyed apart and quite independently of the rest; whilst, all the while, remaining one with the rest by identity of style, analogy of inspiration, and unity of form.

The pieces of Bohemian music which we had already singly produced now had to undergo a new examination; being revised, remodelled and united to others. This was done with the intention of thereby constituting the body of a new important work; and we believe that thus consolidated it results in one fairly corresponding to what we have ventured to consider a

Bohemian Epic.

It would certainly be a great presumption on our part if we were to compare this work with that which took place under the order Pisistratus, when intercalcations had been foisted upon the poetry of Homer by the rhapsodists of his time; thus disfiguring the art work, just as our musicians disfigure the exotic works, fragments of which they reproduce. But are not small things fashioned upon great ones? On a pin—the *fibula* of a Roman toga are there not found the same lines—the same acanthine ornamentation which decorates a beautiful frieze in temple or other edifice? If it be admitted that our proceeding is similar, we may safely crave pardon for the ambitious comparison of our undertaking with that of the Greek

scholiasts; who undertook amongst innumerable versions, apocryphal and of doubtful value, to choose the most pure and worthy of their author; to weed out grammatical errors, provincialisms or common locutions which had made their appearance, and thus to leave for us the inimitable poems which, for three thousand years, have formed the admiration of the world.

But, when we had finished our work, it was impossible to hide from ourselves that a Bohemian "Epic" would stand very little chance of being understood or appreciated in the world to which we were about to introduce it; the more so as we had endeavoured to impart to our work the consistency indispensable for all appearances in the great arena, but without allowing the fulfilment of that condition to involve any loss of the Bohemian savage character.

In 1853 a writer in the "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik," of Leipzig, published some articles on Hungarian music in which he remarked (and, we believe, rightly) that, amongst the many authors who had occupied themselves with arrangements, instrumentations and fantasias based upon Bohemian melodies, we stood alone in having preserved their scale containing the augmented fourth, which is present in all such music truly impregnated with the racial genius.

Monsieur Czehe, who interests himself specially in this branch of art, also expresses regret at seeing this music spoiled by these incorrigible revisors; correctors of what can only be changed in any way at the cost of being degraded and denationalised.

But, for ourselves, personally, the more conscientiously we acted towards art in differing from our predecessors the less we looked for any success from the public. It is well, however, to remember that the real artist who, in art as in everyday life, loves the true because it is true and the beautiful because it is beautiful—is he ever sure of having succeeded? He is too full of his sentiment and his ideal to be ever content with the form which he has given it; which never equals that which he has in his dreams.

Fearing that this music, though so immensely popular in its own country, might otherwise remain somewhat inaccessible to the habits both of mind and ear of other nations, we thought it might be well to cause our Epic to be accompanied by a few words of explanation *sui generis;* and, accordingly, we set about providing it with a preface. But the latter very soon

outran the limits within which we had designed it should be complete, and could not, in fact, be finished straight off.

That was six years ago; and whilst matters so stood we were obliged to issue our volume of music entitled

"Rhapsodies Hongroises";

which, therefore, was called upon to hazard its fate without the letter of recommendation we had intended.

Contrary to all expectation, and due to that *je ne sais quoi* which crops up in all things just when there is no reason to look for it, the public appeared to understand this odd poetry. They seemed taken by a general desire to listen to these various themes; notwithstanding that, on our part, there had been quite a scrupulous abstention from providing any facility.

To use the trade-jargon, these "Rhapsodies Hongroises" were a success. They explained themselves and gained for themselves all desired favour; and it was whilst this musical victory was at its height, having been attained without any assistance from the written word, that our preface was at last finished. These present pages constitute the form in which the belated preface is now presented to the sympathetic audience of the new Epic, who, if they read it, will see that, if we have entertained our readers at some length upon

"The Gipsies and their Music in Hungary,"

it was originally in the hope of facilitating the adoption, within the most elevated sphere of art, of this music so dear to our country. That elevated sphere is no less than the one common to all humanity, within which all nations drink their fill at the vivifying fountains of sublime poetry; that sphere which the progress of time seems continually to extend by introducing to it every day some new proficient, and the universal character of which was recognised by Goethe in his title of "Welt-literatur."

5.—*The story of the "Rhapsodies."*

(2.)

The fact of publishing a part of the considerable materials we had had occasion to amass during our long relations with Bohemians in Hungary as well as with collectors there of their

principal themes, combined with the position taken up by transcribing these materials for the piano as the instrument best capable of rendering the form and spirit of Bohemian art in its entity, necessitated our giving a generic title to the collection —a title clearly to indicate the doubly national character which we considered it to possess. The title thus selected was

"Rhapsodies Hongroises."

By the word "Rhapsody" the intention has been to designate the fantastically *epic* element which we deem this music to contain. Each one of these productions has always seemed to us to form part of a poetic cycle, remarkable by the unity of its inspiration, eminently national. The conditions of this unity are fulfilled by the music belonging exclusively to the one people whose soul and intimate sentiments it accurately depicts; sentiments moreover which are nowhere else so well expressed and which are cast in a form proper to this one nation; having been invented and practised exclusively by them.

These pieces do not recount facts, it is true. But those who know how to listen will easily catch from them the expression of states of soul, forming a compendium of the nation's ideal.

That nation may be one of Pariahs; that is no concern of art. From the moment of its experiencing sentiments capable of being idealised, and of its clothing them in a form of incontestable beauty and fascination, it has acquired citizen rights in the world of art, even if nowhere else; and even though ideal rights in an ideal city can unfortunately only yield that "dream of a shadow" which we call glory.

The qualification "Hungarian" which we have applied to these Rhapsodies is due to our feeling that it would not have been just to separate in the future what has never been separated in the past. It was the Magyars who adopted the Bohemians as national musicians; it was they who identified themselves as much with their proudly fierce enthusiasms as with the poignant sorrows they know so well how to express.

For it was not only with the "Frischka" (that is to say, with the joy of their banquets) that they associated themselves, but also with the "Lassan" of their sorrows—the pathos of which has often moved them to tears. The nomad Zygani, though straggling away to divers countries and cultivating their music elsewhere, never anywhere gave it a value equal to that which

it attained upon Hungarian soil; because in no other country was that sympathetic popularity to be found which is so necessary to its aggrandisement. Hungarian hospitality was so indispensable to the existence of Bohemian music that it belongs as much to the one people as to the other; for, without both the one and the other, it could never have been at all.

For the Hungarians the Bohemian tone-poets were a necessity; but for the Bohemians the sympathetic Hungarian audience was no less so. Hungary, therefore, has a full right to claim this art as its own; fed by its corn and vines, ripened by its sun and shade, acclaimed by its admiration, adorned, embellished and ennobled, thanks to its predilection and protection; besides being so closely intertwined with its manners and patriotic memories, as well as with the most intimate souvenirs of each Hungarian.

May this art figure among the national glories as an immortal conquest; and its image, like some precious medal struck in a mould since lost, be inlaid in a fleuron of the crown alike antique and superb of this our native country.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Life of Bihary the Bohemian.

1.—Preliminary.

THE Bohemian artist whom it is generally agreed to regard as the last of the Romans—the best known hero and the most highly praised and most popular figure of entire Gipsy virtuosity—was Bihary; born in the comitat of Raab, and whose death took place in 1827 at the age of fifty-eight.

We well remember having seen and heard this man; whose exterior reproduced with a masculine beauty all the distinctive features of his race. We are therefore able to say what imperious fascination he exercised when, with a thoughtlessness apparently both careless and melancholy to which his real good nature and seeming joviality, as well as the vivacity of his glance (which seemed to spy the very depths of the listener's soul) stood out in great contrast, he took up his violin. When he did so he would play for several hours without appearing to have the slightest thought for the time which was running on. It kept running on in company with his musical cascades, as they fell in rainbow profusion, or glided along in a soft murmur.

We were just beginning to grow up when, in 1822, we heard this great man amongst other Bohemian virtuosi; and we were therefore even then not too young to be struck and impressed by him. We have not only retained an impression of his inspirations, but they must have distilled into our soul like the essence of some generous and exhilarating wine; for, in recalling his performances to mind, it seems to us that the emo-

tions which we then experienced must have been rather like the effect produced by one of those mysterious elixirs concocted in their secret laboratories by the bold, almost demoniacal alchemists of the Middle Ages, and which are supposed to have had the power of instilling into the veins a new principle of force, virility, valour and pride; besides rendering incorruptible and invulnerable.

Accordingly, the notes, like drops of a spirit essence, were transfused into our ear from Bihary's violin—as from the enchanter to the enchanted. Had our memory been of ductile clay and every note a nail, it could not have become more firmly fixed: had our soul been a virgin soil just emerging from beneath the waters of a river-god like the Nile, and every one of these notes a fertile seed, it could have taken no deeper root. A magnetic upheaval might have concentrated all our senses into that of hearing without our being better able to seize the balsamic flow, or better make that fearful grief our own which seemed, at other times, to filter through his bow.

Bihary carried Gipsy music to its greatest height. It had long been an object of favour and admiration by the Hungarian aristocracy; but now it became an integral part of national representation. It was, in one sense, part of the official ceremonial of the Diet of Presburg; and it figured professedly as national art at the coronation ball, where it was considered as a precious jewel and an object of patriotic pride.

Between the years 1805 and 1825, Bihary imparted such a lustre to Bohemian music that Vienna itself became enthusiastic. There were several occasions on which the Court engaged the troupe which he directed; besides which he appeared with it at various festivals, including those given by foreign ambassadors; amongst others, that of England. Bihary also appeared with his orchestra at several of the theatres, everywhere enjoying a great vogue and being constantly well supported.

It is even related that the Emperor, carried away by the general flow of admiration was disposed to accord to Bihary favours of a quite exceptional character; partly on account of his having attracted the special attention of some of the most highly-placed members of the imperial family; but that one evening, when asked what he would like to receive as a mark of the imperial favour, he upset all the good intentions of his majesty by asking for patents of nobility *for his entire band.*

It was a generous liberality towards his own people, but a rude kind of pride for a Pariah to impose conditions before consenting to renounce his misery.

The trait thus disclosed is admirable in any case. It would be so even in that of proving to have been merely an ingenious subterfuge for avoiding a favour likely to encroach upon his independence.

2.—Bihary's Rise and Triumph.

The fact of an artist of Bohemian race becoming so popular in the high society of our time, when the sympathies which originally existed between Magyar and Bohemian have become effaced among members of the Hungarian nobility, now completely associated as they are with the manners of thought and feeling of the other aristocracies of Europe is too extraordinary for his biography not to be possessed of some interest. We cannot better reproduce the leading traits in the life of this personage, so celebrated in his time, than by translating a notice of his career recently published by Mons. Gabriel Matray, whose name we have already had occasion to mention.

* * * * * * *

John Bihary, one of the most celebrated violinists of Hungary, Bohemian by birth, was born in 1769 at Nagy-Abouy, in the comitat of Presburg; where his father was also known as a good player. He passed his childhood and early youth with his relations at Bäugö in the comitat of Raab; where, at the age of eighteen, he married Eva Banyak, aged fifteen, the daughter of a very celebrated cymbalist at Szerdahely.

Bihary had already sufficiently studied to place himself as first violin at the head of the orchestra to which his father-in-law belonged. After the death of the latter in 1802 he went to Pesth as chief of the band of François Bakos, and there, after acquiring considerable celebrity, he recruited several very able instrumentalists, among whom were:

Bakos Laczi (the son of François), who tried to compete with Bihary, although only a second-violin player;

Ficsur (known also under the name of Ujvari), brought to Pesth by Bihary, who directed the studies he had still to pursue and then took him into his orchestra; and

Joseph Bakos, and
Emmerich Mungyi; equally renowned.

The whole of these artists died at Pesth during the life-time of Bihary, whose orchestra commonly consisted of four string players and a cymbalist. Jean Sarkoczy, whom he engaged in 1815, was about the only one who survived him; leading at Pesth a very miserable existence.

In our capital Bihary promptly found the necessary conditions for perfecting and developing his rare talent. He did not fail to profit by them, and was recompensed for his studious efforts by the unanimous and continually increasing admiration of all the artists and art-patrons of Hungary. He was looked up to as the king of national musicians; so much so that, in a short time, no marriage or festival of any importance, public or private, could be allowed to pass by without his being invited.

At Ofen he frequently played at the palace of the Archduke Palatin, chief of the kingdom; and it may be claimed for his virtuosity that the enthusiasm excited by it heightened the brilliancy of the festivities of the coronation.

At least once a year during this flourishing period he used to go to Vienna, where the services of his troupe for the court ceremonies were often required. One of these occasions was in October, 1814, at the distribution of crosses after the battle of Leipzig; besides which, during the Congress of Vienna, he passed nearly a year in that city, where he had the honour to play before all the crowned heads of Europe, by one and all of whom he was much applauded.

Marie-Louise, having engaged him at a court concert which took place on December 23, 1814, remarked the persistency with which his looks followed one of the princesses who seemed particularly to please him. One of his friends informed me that it was the Queen of Naples by whom he had been so struck; but this could not be, as Queen Caroline was not living at the time. Consequently, it must either have been a Czarewna of Russia, or else Maria Ludovica of Parma, the empress herself, who had fascinated him.

In a short time the empress came near and made the enquiry whether he was married; to which Bihary replied, disconcertedly, that he was; adding that his wife had accompanied him to Vienna. Her majesty then requested that the wife

should be at once presented to her; in response to which Bihary went in search of her, and in a short time returned accompanied by Eva, dressed brilliantly in her picturesque national costume. Being still young, of tall figure, strong and bronzed in colour, her powerful expression completed a somewhat imposing aspect.

The empress received her very gracefully and gave her much praise for keeping close to her husband. Then, turning to Bihary, she told him that, since heaven had given him such a beautiful and faithful companion, he should not be so susceptible to the beauty of the princesses; and recommended him in the future to cultivate more indifference in that respect than he had shown that evening. After the interview she caused fifty ducats to be handed to the wife, and sent them both home in a court carriage.

But this great, high-born lady, so much admired by Bihary, wanted to see him again and to hear him at her own house. There he astonished all auditors; surpassing even himself at the concert thus given in his honour. His pupil, Fiscur, the violoncellist, also distinguished himself on this brilliant occasion; and as the latter was waiting for a chair in order to begin a new piece, the princess graciously offered him her own; also giving them each a gold medal as they took their leave.

Bihary was the very soul of the festival given at the island of St. Margaret, between Pesth and Ofen, by Alexandra Pawlowna, first consort of the Palatine Joseph, to Catherine Pawlowna, her sister, dowager duchess of Oldenburg. This dazzling festival took place in the open air. At it there were rising members of the Hungarian aristocracy, who executed national dances; and the military band of the Esterhazy regiment, which alternated its performances with those of Bihary's orchestra. The latter was for the moment in a state of indiscipline; and it was probably on that account that their playing proved to be all the more of an entrancing and powerful description.

3.—His misfortune and death.

For a quarter of a century Bihary did nothing but proceed from success to success, visiting the principal towns of Hungary, Transylvania, Sclavonia and Galicia. From November 29 to December 4, 1824, he was at Erlau; and it was in quitting

that town that his carriage overturned between Gyöngyös and Hatvan, and caused him to dislocate his left arm.

This accident seemed like the beginning of a series of reverses forming a new and sad period for him. Notwithstanding the assiduous care of the most celebrated doctor of Pesth, George Stably, the muscles of the broken arm remained swollen, and Bihary thus suddenly found himself deprived of the means of subsistence which had hitherto amply provided him with comfort and even luxury. Not being further able to undertake anything but secondary work in the orchestra, he confided the direction of it to John Sarkoczy.

After the ovation extended to him at the Diet of Presburg in 1825, he appeared no more in public. Instead of gay and jocular as he had previously been, he became sombre and morose. One by one the best members of his band departed; and, in a short time, he was reduced to gain his livelihood painfully by the aid of those who remained.

At this period of distress he accidentally came across, at an hotel, some noblemen who were greatly touched at the change which he was suffering and to witness the efforts which he required to put forth for the slow execution of some of the pieces which formerly he used to triumph over like carrying a redoubt by the bayonet.

One of them, seized by one of those practically liberal impulses natural to the Hungarian blood and with that delicacy of heart which inclines the recipient to pride himself upon a benefit instead of preferring to stifle the memory of it, wrapped up the suffering arm with bank-notes of rich amount.

La Rochefoucauld was quite right when he said that ingratitude is far more often the fault of the giver than of the recipient; for, when the first is careless about wounding, the second is naturally pained. Bihary went back to his wife with his cheeks bathed in tears. In their great poverty this unlooked-for resource seemed like an inexhaustible treasure. But his star was on the decline; and, although henceforth out of the reach of want, he could never without tears bear to hear any allusion made to the brilliancy of his youth.

Like every artist, he had been too thoughtless and too generous at the time of his triumphs to have amassed any savings. When old age came with its accompaniment of infirmities, he was obliged, one by one, to sell his gold and diamond rings,

his valuable snuff-boxes, and his beautiful pipes. There only remained his violin, and this he could not make up his mind to sell; even when he was almost beyond making any use of it. Every time the occasion arose for him to be compelled to separate from an object rendered dear to him on account of its connection with his period of glory, he was grievously affected.

Death at last put an end to his sufferings, which had become more and more insupportable. Horribly tormented in the last period of his existence by gout and dropsy, he died at Pesth on April 26, 1827, in the house of a person named Samogy. He was buried the next day in the cemetery of the Faubourg St. Francis, at the cost of some Hungarian magnates; the newspapers announcing his decease.

His only son, John, born Bönja, in 1794, was a talented violinist and played in his father's orchestra. He died miserably, at the age of thirty, of a violent death, caused by excess in drinking; leaving a young widow, Theresa Lakatos de Komorn, and a son, Francis, born in 1816, at Baja. This child was brought up by his grandfather; who taught him to play simple melodies and execute them in public as a means of exciting compassion for his tender age of five years, and of thus obtaining means of subsistence. Bihary also indulged the hope of making him the heir of his renown, but this proved to be merely an illusion.

Bihary's widow lived finally with her daughter, Helen, the wife of Farko's Josy de Raab; dying at the age of seventy-seven years, and being buried at a cost of twenty florins, which she had painfully saved up for that purpose.

Bihary was tall and of powerful stature; his eyes, which were always very open, giving originality to his physiognomy, the features of which were very pronounced. His character was full of frankness and careless gaiety. He was always very much attracted by the fair sex, and seemed to have a particular penchant for grand ladies; which was favoured by a suppleness of mind enabling him to figure well in the great drawing-rooms, where his tact assisted him in courting those who were prettiest and most in view, without any lack of easy bearing.

His gallantry placed him in some awkward situations during his youth, but it never resulted in any painful consequences; and he was highly susceptible and scrupulous on the point of

honour. He was not a lover of strong drink, his indulgences of this kind being prompted mostly by comradeship; and the musicians of his troupe were severely kept in order in this respect as well as in others.

In common with them he wore a costume which had been originally presented by Colonel Charles Kubinji, whose open purse proved a great service to Bihary on many occasions. This costume consisted of dark blue trousers, cut in the Hungarian style, with galoon and black fringe ornamentation; and a red mantle also lined with black and dark blue. The head-gear consisted of a kolpak of otter, with a white feather. The bandsmen continued later on to renew this uniform at their own expense, and it therefore became permanent.

Bihary himself, in his capacity as chief, was the only one to wear gold galoon. At the present time the Bohemian musicians only wear this costume on great occasions, their ordinary dress being that of the civilians.

4.—His career.

Bihary was particularly distinguished by the virtuosity with which he executed the national music, which was always so freshly delivered that it produced the effect of being improvised. His style, although full of that "go" without which no Hungarian audience can be (as it is called) "carried away," was not heavily charged with show passages and side-display. There were certain melodies the beautiful and expressive rendering of which used to touch all hearts. His *Frischka* was full of an intoxicating enthusiasm, but his *Lassan* of a heart-broken and elegiac melancholy which used to impress even those who came to hear him for no other reason than to estimate his value for business purposes. Often both *Frischka* and *Lassan* had to be repeated, and nowadays the whole national music seems to be summed up in the *Czardas*.

Bihary possessed in a high degree the power which seems innate in the Bohemian race of promptly assimilating and transforming elements which one would otherwise deem to be irreconcilable; for, to whatever theme he had to play, he at once gave an accentuation which changed its nature; in the

sense of bringing it round to his own manner of feeling, by scanning it in a novel and original manner.

He never learned to be familiar with musical notation; but it was sufficient for him once to have heard a motive in order to reproduce it, and he would do this at once, modifying it in the strange fashion to which we have just alluded. He seemed then to infuse into it another soul, which clothed it with a physiognomy and imparted to it an expression altogether new; just as a great actor gives to parts already widely known features which no one has ever seen in them before. Although the text recited remains, in such a case, precisely the same, the work itself seems to be entirely different.

When an orchestra alternating with his played at a ball such pieces as *françaises* or *allemandes* he used almost as soon as they had finished to take up the same themes, but with a new vigour. Those were the occasions which yielded full opportunity to observe that wonderful talent in him of completely metamorphosing every theme he handled. However short it was, or however evident the German or Italian stamp it bore, it no sooner came to his hand than it became Bohemian (so to speak) its sentiment possibly exaggerated but always sublime. If it were a lively dance melody he would make it mad with joy and drunk with pleasure; if it were a sentimental operatic air he converted it into a passionate scene calculated to draw tears from his listeners; and if it were already a melancholy theme it became at once with him a burial scene.

When he seemed to think he had caused sufficient emotion he would seize upon some march-motive so as to electrify the company into the required mood for resuming the dance.

Balls were given regularly each winter at the hotel of the "Seven Electors"; which was then the recognised meeting place of high society in Pesth, but is now transformed into a private house. To these he was always invited, but he never began to play before twelve o'clock, however early he might arrive. He instituted at them a sort of concert designed to divide the dancing time and thus give the dancers a short period of rest. For this interval he would generally choose pieces of slow, sad and even funereal character, calculated to prevent anyone from showing any desire to move about whilst they continued. As soon however as a few impatient couples began to appear upon the *parquet*, he started with *kalamayka*,

quadrilles, écossaises and minuets; which were always danced with rare animation. He usually left at about two or three o'clock.

Bihary cannot now be judged as a composer; as, during his life, it was his improvisations which acquired the value and reputation of compositions. He had neither the time nor the patience to reflect and note down the inspirations of his fantasy. To preserve them at all it would have been necessary to adopt some kind of shorthand without his knowledge; for how many spirits lose all grace of spontaneity at the bare thought of reducing the fruit of their impulse to writing like a lawyer's brief? It is even doubtful whether he is really the author of several pieces which have been published and circulated under his name.

But, notwithstanding the incontestable superiority of his own compositions improvised under the fiery impulse of a sudden inspiration and carrying an imprint of unequalled originality, he never refused to execute the works of others; especially of those musicians who had acquired a renown in his art of similar description to his own.

Accordingly, he represented amongst others works of Lavatta and Czermak, rendering them always better if he had heard them given by their composers; for he scarcely knew the notes, and never learned anything from written music.

He seemed governed by the idea that whatever his ear could not easily seize and retain was not worthy of being repeated by him—completed, ornamented, embellished and transfigured by his violin and genius.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Czermak and Bihary Compared.

1.—Preliminary.

LAVOTTA* and Czermak are the most illustrious of the Hungarians who have made a name by their remarkably successful efforts to reproduce the peculiar traits of Gipsy virtuosity. How could we forbear to speak at length concerning Czermak of glorious and unfortunate memory?

Out of all those not actually born beneath a tent he is the only one, in our opinion, who has ever discovered the true seam in that rich mine which we can only compare to the famous and mysterious metal of Corinth, which spread such a sweet perfume and which never could be artificially reproduced. It had been formed by a catastrophe during which all the different kinds of metal which composed the thousands of statues, columns and monuments adorning that incomparable city had been melted together, and its production was therefore caused by the terrible conflagration which destroyed the city before its submission to the Romans. In the same way may we ask:

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* As we possess fewer details of the life of Lavatta than of other Gipsy artists, we content ourselves with mentioning the necessity of making his acquaintance through the medium of his works. His end, though not so tragic as that of Czermak, was equally sad. The Bohemian sentiment seems to have affected his reason; though not as actual insanity except in the milder form of drink-craze. This is all the more anomalous on account of being so rare among the Gipsies; whose old men generally show much vigour, preserving the full use of their faculties notwithstanding all the rigours which go to make up their existence. (Original note.)

Is not Bohemian music a sweet aggregation of different and dissimilar elements, fused into one kind by the dull fire of suffering?

It is difficult to bring home to the minds of strangers the degree of admiration excited in those who have known and heard Czermak, or enable them to realise the apparently extravagant expressions commonly made use of in speaking of the impression which his talent produced. But this enthusiasm becomes conceivable at sight of the writings he has left, which so perfectly contain the most salient qualities of Bohemian art that we have been frequently driven to ask ourselves whether, after all, by some obscure or illegitimate connection there was not Gipsy blood really flowing in his veins?

It appeared evident to us that from this source alone could his inspiration have proceeded. By identifying himself with this art, through a sympathetic divination of the spirit which reigns in it, an European composer may arrive at declaiming, co-ordinating, collecting or executing this music according to the feeling by which it has been dictated; but, in order to inhale it like an aroma inherent to his nature, it is necessary to be of the nature to which that aroma belongs.

Unfortunately, and notwithstanding these appearances, the tragic end of Czermak proves that he was not really of the race; for he could not go through the ordeal it suffers without ceasing to be a poet and artist.

Count Stephen Fay, one of our friends, a passionate lover of Bohemian music and well known as such in Hungary, having several times had remarkable Bohemian bands in his service and having spent much money in their upkeep, as well as upon his collection of their best pieces, recently wrote to us on the subject of the unfortunate Czermak; whom he has long and intimately known.

The contents of his letter (which include the principal facts of Czermak's biography) give some idea of the species of veneration associated with that great man's memory; and will explain why it is quite a habit with Hungarians to resort to heroic expression in speaking of him.

We append a translation of the letter, without assuming responsibility for the panegyric.

Czermak and Bihary Compared

2.—*Memoir of Czermak.*

Czermak! This is a name which Hungary glorifies and is well justified in glorifying; for it was borne by one gifted with a genius essentially Hungarian, who was its greatest—its immortal composer. Let not that, however, prevent others who are not Hungarians from joining us in admiring him—scholars and professors, no less than ordinary folk. All can do no less than homage to the profound sense and marvellous originality with which he succeeded in uniting the beauties and difficulties of classic art with the truly antique sentiment of his nationality.

What a depth of sensibility and splendour of richness did his bow impart to all melody! His play, sometimes soft and melancholy as an autumn breeze, sometimes sharp and provoking like the clicking of spurs, seemed as if it breathed fire. His memory can never be effaced from the minds of those who were happy enough to hear him execute his elegant "Czardas," the clear and well rounded phrases of which conceal such a high mysticism! How dear to all Hungarians he is!

* * * * * * *

A mystery hung over his birth. He said he had been born in Bohemia, signing himself Antoine *de* Czermak, *nobilis et Luidi et Rohans*, thus claiming the privilege of nobility.

Others declare that he was the son of Stephen Illeshazy, supreme hereditary count of the comitat of Trencsin and Liptau. Mons. de Roby, with whom Czermak lived for four years at Izif, in the comitat of Templin, told me one day that his mother was a Bohemian lady of high birth (?). What is certain is that Czermak nourished a truly filial affection for Count Illeshazy, and has even been seen to blush sometimes when this name was thoughtlessly pronounced in his presence.

Whatever may be said about his place of birth or parents—whether the latter were count and Bohemian lady or Slav and princess, it is certain that his sentiments were those of a true Hungarian. It is not known with precision what was the year of his birth, or that of his first arrival in Hungary. First he gave violin lessons in Vienna, and afterwards in the neighbouring comitat. Before long, however, he came to Pesth; where, for some months, he exercised the duties of *maître de chapelle.*

It was at Pesth that he met Lavatta for the first time. He was already familiar with Hungarian music, which he loved with ardour, although he had hitherto only played learned concertos and in quartets of the great masters; both of which had earned for him the warm admiration of connoisseurs.

However superior may have been the performances of Lavatta they did not display, in the opinion of Czermak, all the prestige and incomparable beauty of our art; which can be compared to none, nor is it by any surpassed. But, as it happened, Prince Grassalcowich one day invited Czermak to come to his castle at Gödölo; where he found Bihary playing with his band. On hearing him Czermak burst into tears; and, strenuously embracing the young Bohemian, vowed that from that day forth he would devote himself exclusively to the national music.

From that time he cast aside all pretensions to the reputation of an ordinary violinist, and abandoned all learned and printed music. Soon he began to be fêted at the palaces and residences of the Hungarian aristocracy. His renown increased at such a rate that, shortly afterwards, he was playing at the Vienna court; after which he made a short voyage in Russia. All eyes in Hungary were enthusiastically fixed upon him; and on his return to our dear country everyone seized his compositions with avidity.

His habit was to go from village to village and forest to forest; sometimes frequenting the society of brigands, and sometimes joining a tribe of Gipsies, in order to make the surprise discovery of some folk-melody still unknown; and treasures of this kind were gradually amassed from what he heard at country inns. Years were passed in going through our *Pustas*, our *Sulyasen* and our *Kanaszen.* On his reappearance he took the world by storm with the brilliancy of his talent; having, by that time, arrived at the apogee of his fame.

Hungary had never yet possessed a composer-virtuoso who could have dared compare with him, and it would be rash to hope that the future will ever yield one worthy of bearing his laurels. His bow had a sonority and majesty equal to that of Spohr, as much poignancy as that of Lipinski, and as much agility as that of Rode. He could take the commonest violin of the first Bohemian he came across without failing to charm his audience. There was not a ball given in any part of our country, however distant, without his being invited; in order

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that the company might hear, during the intervals of the dance, some of his touching airs. The point to which he succeeded in expressing the national character was incredible. This meteor —this sun—was then shining in all its brilliancy; the whole of Hungary rejoicing in its possession.

An unforeseen event now gave a fatal turn to his destiny and exercised the saddest influence upon his life. Passing by Erlau he made the acquaintance of Mons. Roby, and, as a consequence of this accidental meeting, he went to live with him at Izif, where he passed four years.

There he fell in love with a young girl, supposed to be of great beauty. Some say that she belonged to the high nobility; others that she was a simple village girl.

Unfortunately, neither the charm of his genius nor the violence of his love had any influence upon her cruel heart, and his love was not returned. This, for a soul so susceptible as his, was a mortal blow. A dull sadness took possession of him; a dark melancholy went on, day by day, ever increasing in his mind; leading him to seek refuge in drink. The two excitements together were more than he could bear, and his mind gave way.

He continued, however, both to play and compose sublimely, amongst his productions being one which we may call his funeral monument—namely, the piece in A minor, expressive of the sadness of misfortune, and entitled

"Szerencsétlen Szerelem,"

or, "Unrequited Love." Mons. Roby evinced towards him numberless proofs of tender friendship; but in a second fit of madness he escaped from the house and wandered about the country, covered with rags like a beggar, with naked feet, a haggard countenance and hair in disorder. Although now insensible to ordinary human sentiment he nevertheless performed prodigies with his bow. At times he would cause his instrument to emit such savage cries of grief that it became terrible to listen to him. It was only when the violin fell from his hands that one could realise that, though able to produce such powerful emotion by his talent, he was henceforth a miserable being, inspiring by himself only the saddest pity.

It is now thirty years ago when, being at Edelin, in the comitat of Barsod, I was present with several musicians at a mass which Count Francis Deszöfy (himself a very good organ

player) caused to be executed. In the middle of the solemnity a man in rags entered suddenly, with eyes inflamed and with animated gestures. Precipitating himself towards the orchestra he snatched the first violin he could reach and amidst general stupefaction played the part as if inspired.

When this odd stranger had given back the instrument he had so unceremoniously seized, they asked him who he was, and he answered proudly:

"Czermak."

At the magic word we were all at his feet. Count Deszöfy had him at once reclothed in a costume more worthy of so great a man; in which he returned, in about half an hour, with the appearance of a real cavalier, but without his expression having undergone any change; for he seemed to regard us all with a kind of disdainful indifference.

He refused to play any more, protesting that the Virgin had forbidden him; but we soon got rid of his scruple by giving him some good Tokay wine, after a few glasses of which he took up his violin and began to play.

I can truly say on my conscience that never have I seen Paganini so completely astound his hearers; and still less Rode. He played the piece known under the name of "Csifrásay" with a perfection and technical ability of which I do not believe Lipinski would have been capable at his best; and the fire of his performance seemed to be associated with a kind of dull despair—truly Bohemian.

Czermak went from house to house begging his food. He has often been seen at the door of a chateau asking for a pair of boots, the gift of which he would requite with some of the divinest music. In this way his inspirations became scattered without anyone being able to collect them; the result of which is that they are in great part lost to us. When the welcome extended to him in any certain place met his approval he would stay somewhat longer there, but rarely beyond two days. Nothing in the world could induce him to give up his vagabond life.

His death took place in a little inn, a few hours after he had written the melody now known as

"Csermak Hallala,"

or "Death of Czermak." His extreme weakness prevented him

from finishing it; so, feeling his end to be near, he wrote at the bottom of the page, "Let Bihary finish it."

A few hours after that he was no more. He was buried, they say, at the cemetery of Veszprim.

3.—Character of Bihary.

What a strange contrast between the destiny of these two musicians—Bihary and Czermak.

In Bihary we have the perfect representative of his race. Without instruction as without desire; without aptitude for any subject requiring reflection, or for that kind of artist-labour which renders art-works monumental and thus not only prolongs their life, which would be otherwise ephemeral, but also promotes the glory of their authors. He lacked all culture; except what is necessarily acquired by continual contact with civilised society, when one possesses the gift of a subtle tact and a mind quick to catch the shades of feeling upon which that society founds its manners; parodied as they are by the exaggerations of conventionality.

Bihary had a gay, open, cordial humour; he liked change; travelling; pretty women; and of course revelled in enthusiasms, applause, festivals, and all exaltations of the senses. But, notwithstanding this easy temperament, always pleased and agreeably surprised at the smiles of fortune (which seemed always unexpected although they came so rapidly), he was nevertheless not exempt from desolating sadness—desperate, irremediable, inconsolable—in short, the sadness with which the entire race to which he belonged is imbued. Not one perhaps has ever been able to chant this sadness—to weep with it—to sob with it—as did Bihary upon his violin.

He bore the greatness of his popularity simply and nobly. He loved the electrical atmosphere which his performances created around him, and cherished those moments when—himself full of emotion—he felt that he had communicated his impressions to his listeners.

He took a delight in seeing them shudder at the introduction of the personality of "Suffering" in full pomp and solemnity; but he would afterwards quickly efface this terrifying vision by causing everything to dance and make merry;

carrying this out with a rage only known to those who have descended to the lowest Tartarus of the human heart. When times grew bad he passed through them carelessly enough, but much cast down. Never having experienced want in his youth, he had never formed any reprehensible habits for its satisfaction, and therefore he remained always honourable.

A true Bohemian, he was without hatred or ill-will towards society; but, at the same time, he was proud—mad for liberty as a faithful type of his race. The favourable conditions under which he lived would probably have always produced upon the Gipsy race the same qualities of nobleness of soul, instinctive and unreasoning; as well as the same defects of conduct: negligence, improvidence, levity and passionate vivacity. It would have been the same with the artistic faculties; with detachment from tendencies of the mind which lead to meditation, speculation, abstraction and deduction; there would have been the same indifference to philosophy, metaphysics and all calculation—and naturally the same indifference to any advantages thus renounced.

In Bihary we find horror of science and reflection; the love of love for itself; the need for passion, the craving for pain as the most powerful excitant; complete abandonment to joy and the eternal pursuit of a poetic ideal.

This poetic ideal, always changing colour, continually dashed but only to be re-constructed, is like the mirages of the desert which lead caravans astray. They seem to hold up before the travellers pictures of smiling oases and fountains. There are towns; and lakes, too, towards which they have only to march. They march and march on, never to reach the objects of their desire; for they continually see them become more and more distant, they dissolve, though only to form again, and even seem to be approaching. Yet, never can the travellers be persuaded that these apparitions are but illusions.

The longing for emotion, in the sense of predominating over every faculty of the intelligence, is the foundation of Bohemian character, as of Bohemian art; and such was the distinctive trait of the genius and the destiny of its most brilliant type—the great Bihary.

Czermak and Bihary Compared

4.—The fate of Czermak.

Czermak is the suffering victim of the cruel antithesis which arises when one who has been brought up amidst the surroundings of our civilisation resolves, by an effort of the imagination, to plunge again into the state generally described as the state of nature; but which is really the unnatural state which the Bohemians refuse to abandon. In remaining so strenuously attached to it they reach a degree of excitement which, to us, seems to approximate to insanity; but which, nevertheless, leaves in them the most noble fibres of the human being, those of the heart, intact.

Yet, whoever, after having lived and felt differently, is rash enough to risk returning to this so-called primitive life, will probably suffer the radical overthrow of those noble faculties which in this world are the exclusive privilege of man; that greatest of all misfortunes—insanity.

It may be that in the complete slumber of some of our virtual powers others come into more active play without causing total destruction of the equilibrium so necessary for preventing the final extinction of the light of reason. This fact is incontestably demonstrated by the continued existence of the Gipsies for so many centuries. But, when once the whole of the intellectual faculties have been awakened, the desire to cause certain of them to reach this extraordinary intensity is to expose oneself to definitive disaster, to this psychical cataclysm which sets up a frightful and perpetual chaos in the human soul.

There are some chasms into which, if you go near them with open eyes, you will certainly be drawn. To try to sound the unsoundable depth and to realise all the horror and torment of it is to encourage giddiness to overtake the senses. Then it is that the equilibrium of the mind gives way, the last glimmerings of judgment, the last remaining strength of will, alike fail; and man, panting and exhausted, falls over the precipice; like a furious courser who, in his passionate excitement, has gone beyond the force which nature has granted.

It must be regarded as wonderful that the Gipsies should have remained as they were without their intellect appearing

to become unsettled, and without madness being ever met with amongst them. But there is no such thing as *becoming* Bohemian; and still less is there one of re-becoming Bohemian in the full sense of the word.

From the instant that certain points of view have become open to the artist's vision, rendering him sensible of certain charms unknown to the nomad, as well as susceptible to certain desires and aspirations foreign to him, it is vain for him to attempt to resume the Gipsy life. He cannot any longer oppose the same courage to the same sufferings, or brave want and dislike with the same indifference. Nor can he any longer support so easily the shame of being banned, the pangs of hunger, the crushing weight of fatigue, or the exhaustion of misery. If, with him, love is associated with the satisfactions and annoyances of *amour propre*; marriage with the idea of a household; or if, as lover, he looks upon his young wife as already in imagination the mother of his children; or if, as artist, the idea of glory unites with that of hereditary patrimony—then, in each one of these cases, Bohemian life becomes a poison against which there is no protection.

To persist with an unchanged serenity in certain abnegations, and to go on without regretting certain repudiations, the important thing is to do as the Bohemian does—ignore the value of what he does not possess: unless perchance he may have arrived at the same result by some other path. That path may be one of faith, hope or charity; the point of departure and support of each of which are not of this world, having nothing to do with its transitory pomp, fallacious joys and mendacious promises.

Czermak had grown up as one of ourselves—received our education, joined in our pleasures, eaten at our table. The enterprise of seeking to make himself Bohemian proving to be beyond his strength, he was called upon to expiate his temerity by the most horrible of misfortunes; as if liberty had purposely changed itself into a Fury for him, as one not called upon to be its unreasoning servitor and slave.

Once having lost the power of reasoning, he retained but a confused idea of the nomadic life which, too late, he had desired to adopt; because no man is capable of enjoying its charms with impunity who has once tasted those of a superior

existence. There, the same liberty, the same ecstasies, the same sublime syntheses are to be found with a different outlook upon that immense field which the human mind surveys. That outlook extends from the instinctive and unregulated aspirations of darkest ignorance to the radiant spheres where all truths combine their rays; to form that firmament which is at once the consolation, the light, the promise, and the splendour of this our terrestrial night.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Progress of Gipsy Music to the Time of Remenyi.

1.—The evils of prosperity.

FORMERLY nearly every small town in Hungary had its troupe of Gipsy musicians who circulated within a certain radius, finding therein sufficient to supply its wants on quitting forest and camp. It was only occasionally that individuals or bands were met with sufficiently remarkable to warrant their being required from a long distance; but yet there were many more or less celebrated, and who were well known and frequently spoken of on account of the excellence of their virtuosi.

The greater part of the magnates or noblemen of the country retained orchestras in their service, the members of which were frequently changed on account of the competition which existed as to whose artists should be the best. In this way Gipsy art spread itself completely over Hungarian territory, like a creeping vegetation interlaced and flourishing.

The entire population was, so to speak, affected by it; for it had become a national taste and pleasure. Everybody, rich or poor, great or small, participated in it and enjoyed it to the same degree; which is literally the case since it was the same virtuosi and the same orchestras that at one time astonished the princes and lords, and at another charmed and moved the people; playing with the same brilliancy and the same poetry in the barns where the peasants dance as in the gilded palaces where the great ladies disport themselves. The most distinguished troupes were annually well paid by the patrons of their art, but they would never engage themselves for more

than a limited time; the custom being to return, either together or separately, to the larger towns equally with the smallest hamlets, in order to remain there under the same conditions as the others.

There would have been scarcely any difficulty in saying beforehand that Gipsy music would not be allowed to attain to the point of perfection or the degree of renown it has enjoyed for the last century without having plenty of fanatical admirers and imitators, as well as that high society would scarcely fail to become seriously infected. In point of fact there came a time in Hungary when every musician was obliged to make himself acquainted with it; for every amateur insisted on hearing it, even if he did not try to fabricate some. Then, naturally, the smaller folk among virtuosi began to navigate for certificates of merit and to compete with one another in this school. They were not satisfied with hearing this music in its traditional versions, though sometimes they were contented with mere annotation. Soon, however, the more ambitious embarked upon what they called "correcting" and "embellishing" these works.

The natural end of all this was to "compose" in Gipsy style; for the caprice of the mode and the vogue it had attained was sure to inspire mediocrities of inferior talent with this idea; those who have no real individuality still often having a certain skill in imitating; especially when the general infatuation in favour of a style compels their admiration.

Science also began to be mixed up with the movement, excited by an interest both lively and unanimous. The idea was to collect traditions and to follow them up to their origin; a particularly unpromising enterprise and one which, as we have indicated, met with very little success. For want of any real source of information, archæology was brought into play; and unearthing ancient instruments and retracing their history was associated with following up the origin and story of the most popular Gipsy melodies.

But, as it is impossible to judge of any art by hearsay, and as we possess not the slightest fact to go by in order to form an idea of what Bohemian music was before our time, existing as it did only for its auditors and not having been transmitted by writing, but orally, we should not be able to say whether, however probable, this is not really another case in which theory arrived when practice departed.

Such remarkable artists as Bihary and Czermak could not possibly have signalised the decadence of any art except in the sense that a mountain crest marks the end of a long ascent. This is unquestionable; and yet it may not be altogether incorrect to note that, since their time, great artists have become the more rare as the scientific rage has become the more interested in this branch of music. In every art vitality subsides at the approach of the wen and the scalpel. It is with love and enthusiasm that we must draw near to art; for, like a beautiful woman, it will not otherwise unfold its retiring graces or its more ardent and captivating attractions. It loses consciousness; as she would, also, if stripped in order to ascertain the working of certain parts, to watch pulsations, or trace the genealogical origin of secret beauties by inspection.

Bohemian music has more and more become, during the present century, a subject of Hungarian pride. Right or wrong, the national claim to it has been defined by use of the term "Hungarian"—instead of "Bohemian" music. As the days pass we may observe the Bohemians more and more considered only as executants. It may be that they themselves are the cause of this effacement of their name by the change which has occurred in their character. Not without reason has it been affirmed that, of the two great tests (of great prosperity and great adversity) the more difficult by far to undergo is the former.

The success obtained at the Congress of Vienna by these half-savage virtuosi has not proved by any means to have been for them a healthy stimulant. The bands most in request soon found their enthusiasm evaporating and their originality become trivial; whilst we, for our own part, had ample opportunity to observe, both how favourably they were influenced by the proximity of their hordes and of free Nature, and how contrary the effect of sustained contact with other forms of art.

An involuntary respect for the very civilisation they reject prevents them from having a clear idea of the position they occupy; and which depends upon their contempt for it as an institution, and upon their ignorance of its rules. By causing their art more to resemble our own they think to improve and to perfect it; but, instead of that, they steal away its original and peculiar features, making a faded production void of individual character.

Gipsy Music to the Time of Remenyi

2.—Beethoven and Schubert.

It is easy to convince oneself to what an imperfect degree "civilised" musicians have penetrated the characteristics of Bohemian art on the few occasions of their occupying themselves with it when we see such masters as Beethoven and Schubert failing to produce features essential to its form, and evidently not realising that those features constitute its very essence. Both of these composers, however, and especially the first, were inspired by the inexpressible suffering, as also by the audacious defiance therein expressed.

Beethoven in particular had a sort of vague intuition that certain pains, suffocations of the soul, intolerable oppressions and moral inanitions, having attained a state of delirium beyond either medical aid or remedy by natural means, could only be expressed under Bohemian forms—which are as foreign to our civilisation as the sentiments themselves.

This genius, therefore, after having himself tasted the dregs of the chalice of human suffering, seemed, towards the end of his life, to have arrived at the condition of soul from which Bohemian feeling first proceeds; and thus to have more than once remembered Gipsy art in his later works. But, being done without plan, cohesion, or any developed sequence of ideas, one might almost say that it bore the appearance of his not having been properly "briefed," if it were permissible to apply such an expression to so great a man.

Schubert did not, any more than Beethoven, understand that a Bohemian art existed—that it was one by itself, having nothing in common with our art, and forming (as they say in architecture) a separate style; which simply is as *it* is because the Bohemian is as *he* is.

Beethoven and Schubert both attempted to bring, as we might say, some stray portions of Bohemian art into their own; like trying to cultivate in a strange climate stray seeds which had been borne upon the wind. As both of them lived in Vienna, they were quite well enough acquainted with Bohemian music to be struck by its originality; but neither of them recognised the individuality of Bohemian sentiment, and that Bohemian art could engender only in the Bohemian type.

During a stay which Schubert made at the chateau of one

of the first families in Hungary he transcribed some Bohemian motives for the piano, forming them into a piece for four hands, one of the most ravishing of all his works, and entitled

"Divertissement Hongrois."

In examining it, however, it is easy to perceive that he did not look upon these productions as exotic plants; samples revealing the flora of a zone as yet unexplored. He did not give himself the trouble to penetrate sufficiently its spirit and intimate sense.

He seemed, for instance, to regard an abrupt modulation as *lapsus linguæ*; intentional repetitions as pleonasm; strange chords as barbarisms; and all unusual augmentations and diminutions as incorrect—all of these being features which constitute the Bohemian style. He concerned himself only with the broad design and with the motives displayed by the melodic progressions; making himself familiar also with the special function taken over by the rhythm in its several changes, but not troubling overmuch about any importance which might attach to the ornamentation. It is, in short, quite evident, from the manner in which he treated Bohemian motives, that he did not recognise them as belonging to an art different from every other; constructed on another foundation and built on different principles. He estimated the fragments which reached him to be mere off-shoots, disfigured and disseminated haphazard by coarse, rough players; and fondly imagined he was giving them some value by trimming them up according to our rules and methods.

Probably he may have even thought he was doing them quite sufficient justice and honour by rescuing those which seemed to lend themselves best to his purpose from complete oblivion—that purpose being to send them out in a precious setting to be recognised as from the hands of the master.

It certainly did not occur to him that he was unjust in treating this national music in a way different from that he had applied to Scotch, Styrian and other themes. The idea never so much as occurred to him that he was in presence of a great movement; with regard to which the question was not one of restoring or arranging, but of seizing the style, and reconstructing the marvellous ensemble, by intuitive divination of the proportion occupied by details and the immense part played by them.

After such an illustrious example, what can we expect from

the greater part of the average men and mediocrities who pursue the mode and make a business of supplying amateurs and musical patriots of Vienna, Pesth, Presburg and other Hungarian towns with their annual musical ration; put together in the first way which comes to hand, on *national* themes, for voice, piano, violoncello, and a hundred other instruments.

3.—Cause of the Decline.

Nowadays Bohemian musicians, instead of the nomads they formerly were, have become commercial travellers. Instead of moving off along with their tribe, folding their tent and lifting their cooking vessel into the dusty wagon, they go from one capital to another by railway in company; so as to carry on business in the European style. Ever since they began to sniff a new musical atmosphere, causing art to become to them less a joy than a trade; ever since they first acquired the greed for gain, that passion for lucre common to the great commercial centres and infinitely more corrupting and corrupted than the thieving habit when exercised with a sort of primitive *naïveté*; ever since all this, they have devoted themselves to speculation; and, like many others, now seek reputation merely in order to find money. Given up to that mammon-worship, which is specially hideous when artists engage in it, they now forsake art for the sake of gain.

What could the used-up and partly gangrenous populations of the immense capitals understand about an art which had gradually unfolded itself in the bosom of nature, and which had taken at least four centuries of growth to reach its present stature of a great towering tree overshadowing with its superb branches an entire country? Curiosity and the idle search for something new contested, at first, with the vulgar crowd for interest in the new comer; but as soon as they perceived that the sentiments expressed in this strange noble idiom were completely unknown to them, they wanted to return again to their usual diet—to listen again to the common run of ritornello, ariette, valse, and so forth.

By way of punishment for the fault they had committed in giving themselves up to a sordid interest the Bohemians were gradually compelled to sacrifice their art and mix up the

passionate accents of their adorable melodies with romances, cavatinas and pot-pourris in order to secure and retain their listeners.* Engaged in such a trade, their entire merit disappears; by degrees they even lose the very habit of their art; and in many places they never play Bohemian music at all except on request and in return for a stipulated payment.

But after all their principal object is attained. A public (which we will not call ignoble, but which, to say the least, is far from being noble) finds itself in public gardens, cafés, alcazars or exhibitions; where, for a couple of francs a head, it is admitted to see and hear certain worn-out theatrical pieces. They are invariably old acquaintances; and remind one of the ball-dresses which, after having displayed their first bloom, finally arrive as used-up finery at the shop of the second-hand dealer.

This public, on viewing the Bohemians, estimate them for what, henceforth, they really are; that is to say, workmen, money-getters, ready to perform a fire-swallowing or any other conjuring trick. This public, moreover, being fairly unscrupulous itself, judges our Bohemians to be the same; and accordingly, having read a wonderful account of their virtuosity beforehand, they think they *must* have really heard something quite exceptional.

In point of fact, however, they have been listening to the most miserable re-hash imaginable. Still, that will not prevent them from returning home quite satisfied with the performance: a performance which might equally well have been given by the first scratch orchestra.

It must be allowed, however, that not alone amongst musicians is this falling off in the national type to be observed. In allowing the outlines of their individuality to become faded they share in the fate of the greater part of schools and nations at the present day, carried away by the general impulse in favour of destroying the salient features by which the sentiments and modes of life and speech of each one of them is distinguished.

National character proceeds in the direction of effacement

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* Liszt has, in the French original, ventured a slight joke on the word *pot-pourris*, to which he adds in parenthesis *(très-pourris)*, meaning (very rotten) by way of slyly indicating his contempt for such music.

in everything and everywhere. To speak only of music, we see the ultra-Italian masters pretending that they are but slightly removed in style from the ultra-Germans; whilst the theatres of Paris and London are a selected composition of divers elements drawn from France, Italy and Germany.

It would be useless to deceive oneself. If nowadays, on the one hand, the human mind seems to attain a prodigious development in all branches of its activity—(science, literature, art, industry, commerce, speculation, research)—and not only in every branch but in all sub-divisions of each; on the other, it loses in the originality of individuals what it gains in extension of the mass.

In the same degree that works assume gigantic proportions they demand the co-operation of the many. Not being able to avoid lending himself to the exigencies of this giant associate, henceforth indispensable, the individual feels himself, if not crushed, at least flattened, under the colossal cylinder that this new Briareus with a hundred arms applies to his passions and peculiarities. The artist, for example, is seized from his infancy by every interior and excitable motive, as well as by interests of the liveliest and dearest kind, and then placed in the vice of social and conventional necessities; where an immense flattening mill receives all the roughnesses presented by his temperament.

After the crushing process (by which he is deprived of every speciality appertaining to his personal character) he is thrown into a final mould, that of society decorum; which has the effect of making him seem like everybody else. In this condition he sallies forth, a commonplace being; colourless and insipid. He is simply the exact copy of his predecessor, his neighbour and his successor—unless perchance he should happen to be superior to the whole of them; which, however, no one has any right to be.

A period of transition, they tell us. Certainly it is—none could deny it. The only reason for making the individual pass through the turn-stile of civilisation was to make him lose his native deformities, his accidental disfigurements and his oddities of character; the ill-effects of a neglect which ethics will be scarcely able to dam up, and which will probably also rebel against æsthetics.

There never will be a period of Christian civilisation when

the individual will be completely prevented from showing the beauty of his soul as of his body; the distinctive traits of his heart and intelligence; the inimitable peculiarities of his character and mind, and the new forms of his genius! . . . . But who can ignore that these periods of transition devour, like sea-travelling, millions who lack the courage, presence of mind or knowledge as required to escape from danger instead of abandoning themselves to be drowned.

Under this terrible level (which at the present day equalises all statures, if not all social elevations) art should assuredly be the most elastic of all the elements under restraint. Proceeding directly from feeling and imagination, it would seem impossible to impose upon it a uniform livery. But the ancients knew that by the side of Bacchus, the god of inspiration and poetic transport, whom (by one of their most profound and striking psychological intuitions) they always represented as deeply sad, under his beautifully elegant and supple form, there was room for Silenus.

And, in the same way, in the time of Rossini and Wagner, just as much as in that of Phidias and Praxiteles, by the side of art there is the business!

They both drink of the same cup—one to become the initiator of the people in a superior civilisation, the other to wallow in the gutter where his drunkenness has caused him to fall.

Nothing was so fatal to Bohemian art as the loss of the Bohemian type; which brought in its train the neglect or the silence of Bohemian sentiment. Soon, Bohemian musicians, issuing from the homogeneous world which Hungary had created for them, wanted to make themselves admired by those who were unable to enter into their ideas. The obligation of appealing to a cosmopolitan public naturally spreads the habit of collaboration. This, in its turn, more and more frequently takes the place of inspiration and individual will; just as machinery is everywhere replacing handiwork.

Our Bohemians, therefore, once having entered the universal forum, could no longer dispense with playing Meyerbeer and Donizetti; Strauss and Lanner. Soon, no doubt, we shall hear them giving some Mendelssohn, Schumann, Berlioz and Wagner at their concerts. They, the immediate children of fantasy and pure inspiration, will now dispose themselves to recite productions due to reflection and thought!

Seeing troupes organise and file off in every direction ornamented by the white panache of the locomotive, seeing them appear and disappear at international exhibitions of Paris, Vienna, London, Philadelphia and Melbourne, can only mean that the time will soon arrive when their glory will be merely a remembrance—when Bohemian art will be a thing which once was, but is no more.

4.—Remenji.

In this state of things it was, for us, a great satisfaction to meet with a young Hungarian who, whilst in full possession of manners suited to the society he had frequented, has none the less preserved sufficient individuality, enough spontaneity, for it to be one day said of him (as it is still said of Czermak) that, without being a Romany, he has nevertheless perfectly assimilated Bohemian music and sentiment.

Alone amongst contemporary violinists Remenjí possesses the authentic tradition, the veritable form, and the esoteric sense of this art. Never have we been able to listen to him without feeling an emotion which, for the first time, caused those souvenirs which Bihary had left in our soul to be again revived.

A young Tyrtæus of seventeen years, he was attached to the person of Gyorgey, during the Hungarian war, in the capacity of virtuoso. Like the ancient Zygani spoken of in the chronicles, he played the violin before and after the battle—not with the army, but for its leaders. He left his country at the time of the emigration, resolved to devote himself henceforth exclusively to art; and from the moment of his first public appearance the press gave him great praise.

He first became known in Hamburg, then in London; after which he went to America, where he began to settle. But notwithstanding the success which he attained there, he very soon returned; on account of failing to find a sufficiency of elements sympathetic to his art.

On his return to Europe his concerts had even more success than before.

Notwithstanding the applause which he has already reaped,

he promises to be one of those who have a higher object in view than that of making a name for the mere purpose of amassing wealth.

He hopes to be in future counted amongst those who, during their whole life, never ceased to progress, but constantly tended towards a supreme ideal. The ideal of Remenjí is clearly that of Bohemian sentiment in all its sombre passion; its profound feeling of bitterness; its reverie in endless varieties of form and colour; and with its brisk and fulsome enthusiasm. For all that, however, he continues his classical studies with much zeal. A sort of Bohemian amour-propre seems to actuate him; for after securing his fill of applause for his Bach "Chaconne," Vieuxtemps concertos and other works, he comes back to his *Lassan* and *Frischka*; and the redoubled animation with which he does so bears the interpretation of tacitly saying to his audience:

"See! what we Bohemians can do! How much better it is than all the rest."

In order to represent what Bohemian art in Hungary was at its best period we should require artists widely different from the insipid counterfeits we now have. Remenjí possesses exactly one of those vivacious organisations—generous, slightly jocular and hostile to all monotony—which constantly bring originality into play, in everything and in spite of everything. It is a guarantee of the vitality of his talent and promises for him a special place in the gallery of men who have rendered service in rescuing a drooping form of art.

But will he sustain all that seems to be thus promised?

Will he attain to all that his young enthusiasm aims at, with its "Excelsior"?

On some happy day, and at a lucky hour, this young Hungarian may place his foot on one of the summits symbolised by the antarctic volcano Erebus; which throws its nocturnal fires into the midst of the ancient ice-fields lying around it as a girdle (less cold perhaps than human indifference); and he may then, like Lavatta and Czermak, be able to identify himself with the Bohemian sentiment, in spite of not having in his veins blood warmed by the equatorial ardours of the Indian peninsula.

But, even then, it will still remain to be seen whether he will know how to maintain so high a position.

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